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“I like to climb and pick coconuts”.
Moving towards a child-guided agentic
participatory research methodology:
7 to 11 years children’s experiences of
physical activity.

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B.Ed. Movement Studies
Master of Business Administration
Master of Business and Research Methods
Master of Research (Education)

Thesis presented for the degree of Doctorate in Philosophy

School of Education, Childhood, Youth and Sport in the Faculty of Wellbeing,

Education and Language Studies

The Open University

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously submitted to the Open University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Abstract

In 2018 only 18% of children met the UK Chief Medical Officers' recommended physical activity levels in England (Public Health England, 2018). Despite emerging evidence suggesting that declines in physical activity may originate from 7 years old, little research has been undertaken with middle childhood children. This study addresses gaps in research which gives children an opportunity to express their lived experiences of physical activity.

The aim of this thesis was to evaluate the extent to which a new child-guided approach to researching lived experiences of middle childhood physical activity provided insights into children's activity choices and familial influences. Informed by social constructivism this study assumed that children were agentic social actors capable not only of contributing to research but capable of guiding research into matters which affected them. Participatory and existential phenomenological methodologies were brought together in a new model of agentic child-guided (AChiG) participatory research. Physical activity was conceptualised as an embodied experience and framed as an individually socioecologically contextualised phenomenon (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 1962).

I enabled coresearchers to identify fresh conceptualisations of physical activity through the use of the AChiG model. Coresearchers conceptualised physical activity for instance as 'conquering creative challenges' and 'playing at' structured activities.

High levels of imagination and creativity together with a strong motivation to connect with close family members underpinned fun and enjoyment which drove physical activity. Coresearchers also contextualised physical activity within a broad range of physically active and inactive free-choice pursuits. These competed for coresearchers time in fluid, layered and spontaneous ways. These insights and lessons learnt from the new child-guided approach provide potentially fruitful strands to inform further research.

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1. Introduction

In common with many developed countries, England has high and increasing levels of childhood obesity and associated health and wellbeing issues which could be improved by increased levels of physical activity (The NHS Information Centre, 2018). The problem of inactivity attracted a combined policy response from UK Government Departments responsible for Health, Sport and Education in England at the start of the new millennium.

This coordinated approach was supported by the decision to bid for the hosting of the London 2012 Games. Unprecedented public and private investment and promotion of youth sport took place in the years leading to and beyond the London 2012 Games (Collins *et al.*, 2012). The London 2012 Games promoted the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) physical activity guidelines, promising to provide a Games legacy of a new generation of more active young people. In 2012 the NICE (2009a) guidelines were reflected in the World Health Organisation guidelines and also adopted by the UK Chief Medical Officers (UKCMOs) (i.e. England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland). These guidelines have remained consistent through regular reviews (NICE, 2018) with the headline recommendation:

‘Children and young people are recommended to do a minimum of 60 minutes moderate to vigorous physical activity daily’, to include “weight-bearing activities to improve bone health, muscle strength and flexibility at least twice a week.’ (NICE, 2009a, p. 28)

Subsequently health and wellbeing, physical education, school and community sport policies have competed and created dominant policy discourses which have shaped discussion about children’s physical activity, their experiences and opportunities to be active. The focus upon physical activity is variously conceptualised by different organisations as:

- Overall physical activity levels which support healthy lifestyles i.e. ‘which looks beyond organised sport to everyday activity such as active transport’ (Public Health England (PHE))¹.
- An outcome of physical literacy through the provision of High Quality Physical Education and School Sport (HQPESS) (The Association for Physical Education (afPE))²
- A vehicle for personal and social development encouraged by experience of competition supported by an infrastructure of school sport competition and sport leadership opportunities (The Youth Sport Trust (YST))³
- Sports participation, broadened in 2016 to focus also upon ‘family physical activity’ (Sport England, 2016)

These conceptualisations have given less attention to other NICE recommendations, for instance that whilst physical competence is essential to intrinsically motivate children and young people to sustain physical activity levels:

... ‘when encouraging younger children to be physically active the focus should be on fun, enjoyment and active participation, rather than on the need to understand and conform to rules or master complex skills’ (NICE, 2018, p. 29)

In 2018 Public Health England (PHE) reported that, excluding activities in school lessons, only 23% of boys and 20% of girls aged 5-15 years met the guidelines (Public Health England, 2018). Existing policy and practice appeared to have failed to significantly improve sustained increases in children’s physical activity (Evans and Davies, 2010). Within sport and physical activity provision, a disparity existed between Government policies, strategic provision for children’s physical activity and the lived realities of children’s participation (Wellard, 2013). This had led to tensions and ‘unnecessary

¹ PHE’s stated purpose: “We protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities”. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/about> downloaded 22/01/16)

² afPE, is the professional membership body for specialist Physical Education teachers.

³ The Youth Sport Trust is an independent charity established in 1995, which aims to help all young people to achieve their full potential through experiencing high quality physical education and sport (Youth Sport Trust, 2016).

divisions as those with vested interests feel the need to ‘take sides’ (Wellard, 2013, p. 8); as the example of four different public policy discourse conceptualisations (health and wellbeing, physical education, school sport competition and family physical activity) illustrated.

New ways of investigating and conceptualising children’s physical activity could perhaps reveal different ways of supporting children to become more active. Exploring children’s own lived experiences of their chosen physical activity in free choice times and spaces might access new insights into those experiences. My professional experience working with children and young people in activity leadership roles had demonstrated the knowledge and understanding that even young children had about shaping and participating in enjoyable physical activity experiences. Engaging with children in a participatory research approach, with them as coresearchers exploring their own physical activity choices and experiences, offered more potential than solely an adult perspective. Coresearchers perceptions, interpretations and perspectives were built into the research process to guide and conduct research in distinctive ways explained in more detail in Chapter 4 (Methodology).

1.1 The lived realities of children’s free-choice experiences of physical activity

In this study I sought to look beyond the different various public policy discourses to focus upon the lived realities of children’s own free-choice experiences of physical activity. The study looked beyond physical activity as organised sport and physical education, or sport as a mere mechanism for improved health and wellbeing (Janssen and LeBlanc, 2010; Craike et al., 2018). By focusing on children’s free-choice activities, I sought to focus upon children’s own contribution to the development of their understandings and experiences of physical activity in the context of their recreation beyond school curriculum time.

This led me to employ a different conceptualisation of children’s physical activity which was:

- An individually and socially constructed experience
- Broadly defined to include, but not be limited by, the NICE recommendations which underpinned much policy and practice in the provision of physical activity services for children
- Focused upon physical activities which children chose; which might provide sources of fun and enjoyment that could create positive memories and habits of physical activity to motivate sustained active lifestyles for life (Wellard, 2012).

Simultaneously, through my professional community recreation career with children, I was aware of the knowledge and understanding children have about how they and their peers like to be active. I wanted to draw upon the knowledge and experiences of children themselves in the study's inquiry to see if this provided new insights into children's experiences. Following a pilot study with 5 to 10 years old children (Plowright, 2015) in a community holiday activity club, and another with 7 to 8 years old children (Plowright, 2017) in their school playtimes, I chose to research with 7 to 11 years old children. This is a formative period of development during which children in the pilot studies had demonstrated their highly imaginative and social physical activity choices beyond curriculum time. Children were gaining physical movement skills and were starting to experience increased agency and choice in their activities, potentially forming health and physical activity habits for life (Lindon, 2007). Furthermore there was evidence to suggest that 'physical activity is in decline in most individuals of both sexes by age 6-7 years in the UK' (Adamson *et al.*, 2017, p. 1).

1.2 Definition of key terms

Within children's physical activity investigations key terms are used differently and interchangeably. For clarity, I have set out here how I used some of those key terms within this study, drawing where possible upon the definitions of key agencies responsible for strategically shaping different strands of physical activity within England:

- **Physical activity** was used in this study as an inclusive term defined by Public Health England as: ‘body movement that expends energy and raises the heart rate’ (2014, p. 4). It includes all measures of activity (low, moderate and vigorous) used by health experts to describe minimum levels of physical activity for wellbeing, because I am interested in children’s conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity not the measurement of their activity levels
- **Sport** underwent a public policy definition change in 2015 in England when the UK Government strategy for sport, “Sporting Future”, set about ‘ending the distinction between sport and wider forms of physical activity’ (DCMS, 2015; Sport England, 2016b). The reframing illustrated changes in public discourses about physical activity at the time of the study. However, the broader definition of sport did not help to illuminate the different contexts in which children experienced physical activity during the study. I have therefore adopted the following definition of **sport** as:

‘A human activity, usually associated with a degree of physical exertion, in which a skill is accomplished in performance or contest, and for which there is either a competitive outcome (winner, loser, or position), a measurable achievement (logged by the rowing-machine or the timer's stopwatch), or some other or further perceived benefit (health, fitness, pleasure/fun)’ (Tomlinson, 2010).
- **School sport** is ‘the structured learning that takes place beyond the curriculum (i.e. in the extended curriculum) within school settings; this is sometimes referred to as out-of-school-hours learning’ (Harris, 2015, p. 3). School sport is voluntarily engaged in and has the potential to build on physical education.
- **Physical education** is ‘the planned, progressive learning that takes place in school curriculum timetabled time and which is delivered to all pupils’ (Harris, 2015, p. 3).

- **Recreation or recreational activity** is generally undertaken voluntarily, for pleasure and in a person's leisure time. It refers to the motivation and/or purpose and manner of participation, i.e. as a personal experience or the forms it takes (Torkildsen, 1986). In other words, sport can be recreational or competitive.
- **Active play** is 'freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated, spontaneous and pleasurable' (Brockman, Fox and Jago, 2011, p. 2). As long as these conditions are met active play can be almost anything; it is the way in which children experience the physical activity i.e. for fun, which defines it as play (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018)
- **Pursuit** is a term used to refer generically to any pastimes children engaged in, whether physical active or inactive (e.g. reading; sedentary screen-based play and gaming). Physical activity was therefore just a part of chosen pursuits.

1.3 Research aim and questions

The study's overall research aim was:

To investigate the lived experiences of physical activity in middle childhood, and to explore whether working towards a new child-guided participatory research approach might assist in revealing new insights.

Through a small-scale qualitative study, I set out to contribute to the building of compelling bodies of evidence which might better inform policy makers and practitioners how best to support children to develop and sustain more physically active lifestyles for life.

In keeping with qualitative research approaches, particularly participatory methodologies, the research aim provided the basis for research questions which continued to develop throughout the study (Mason, 2002). The opportunity for research participants to contribute to the shaping of research questions was an important and distinctive aspect of establishing participants' roles as coresearchers to the study. The evolving research questions are included at four key stages throughout the reporting of the study. An initial draft set of questions is included at the end of the Literature Review (Chapter 2); with

developments after the Theoretical Framing of the study (Chapter 3); in the Methodology (Chapter 4); and in response to coresearchers' interests at the end of the Findings (Chapter 5).

1.4 Thesis chapter contents

In Chapter 2: Literature Review, I explore three key strands of research which had potential to inform this inquiry. These comprised research which investigated: children's experiences of their participation in physical activity; participatory approaches to studying children's experiences of physical activity; and sources of fun and enjoyment underpinning experiences of physical activity. The chapter concludes with research questions shaped by the findings of the Literature Review.

The ontological approach to research sets out how we understand the nature of the world and of being in the world. The epistemological approach describes the way in which we view knowledge (Stainton-Rogers, 2006). The ontological and epistemological underpinnings and theoretical framing of the study are set out in Chapter 3. This sets out the study's social constructivist approach. Ontologically this establishes that there is no commonly shared, universal understanding of the world and phenomena such as children's physical activity. Informed by this approach, I contend that children's physical activity has multiple identities. Physical activity is differently constructed as a phenomenon by different children and each child's construction changes in time and space.

Epistemologically, I set out my belief that children construct their knowledge and understandings about physical activity through their social interactions and experiences of physical activity. Knowledge of physical activity is constructed through children's embodied physical, social, aesthetic and emotional experiences of activity.

Complementing this view of the world, I set out my view that children are capable not only of participating fully in research but also working collaboratively with adult researchers to guide studies into their own lived experiences of phenomena in which they are interested.

From this research approach I propose moving towards a new agentic child-guided (AChiG) participatory research model. This brings together participatory and existential

phenomenological research methodologies to engage 7 to 11 years old children as coresearchers in an autophenomenological investigation of their own lived experiences of physical activity. The chapter concludes with a review of the research questions shaped by the combined participatory and phenomenological focus upon the coresearchers' own lived experience of physical activity.

Chapter 4: Methodology sets out the agentic child-guided (AChiG) approach that I used in the study. I highlight key elements of the methodology designed to deploy children's agency over their construction of knowledge. I focus on key features of the participatory methodology, comprising continuous researcher reflexivity, the development of research questions that are relevant to coresearchers, and coresearcher - guided data collection and analysis. I conclude this chapter with ethical considerations of working with 7 to 11 years old coresearchers.

Research Findings in Chapter 5 set out detailed descriptions of six coresearchers' experiences of physical activity as far as possible shaped from coresearchers' own words and description of their experiences. I set out the themes in coresearchers' data comprising: Mastery of activities; Identity; Chilling, Play and having fun; Time with family and Creativity. I then give particular attention to each coresearcher's headings to describe their data and explain how I used those headings to guide further inductive analysis of coresearchers' data. The results of inductive analysis are presented for each coresearcher, which I go on to discuss in Chapters 6 and 7. Before closing the chapter, I review the research questions for a final time, foregrounding common coresearchers' interests revealed in their data.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings addresses the first two research questions about how coresearchers conceptualised physical activity as part of their free-choice pursuits and what was the essence of their lived experiences. I set out how coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity can be shown along a continuum from active play to mastery activities and discuss themes within coresearchers' data which described their lived experiences of physical activity.

Chapter 7 then goes on to address the third research question by considering how socioecological factors in coresearchers' data impacted on their conceptualisation and experiences of physical activity. A wide range of sociological influences are discussed. I use Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development highlighting the importance of each coresearcher's immediate family setting. I also consider broader policy discourses impacting on coresearchers and their families through strong media messaging.

In the final Chapter 8: Conclusions, I consider the consequences of coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity. I then address the research aim to ascertain the extent to which a child-guided participatory research approach might offer new insights into children's lived experiences of physical activity. I review the way in which coresearchers participated in research; the degree to which key aspects of the AChiG model were successful in encouraging coresearchers' agency to guide research processes; and the impact of the AChiG approach on research findings. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and further development of the AChiG methodological approach.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter was to explore literature which had potential to inform my research aim and to identify any gaps in research. I reviewed literature which:

- Explored children's experiences of physical activity and factors which shaped their experiences
- Used participatory methods to research children's lived experiences of physical activity.

In terms of timing and the overall environment in which the study is located, the two decades leading to the study was a period of considerable public policy development for children's physical activity in England. In particular, concerns about children's low and declining physical activity levels in England gave rise in 2002 to significant Government investment in children's PE and school sport (PESS) in England. That investment was sustained as part of the strategy for the successful bid and hosting of the London 2012 Games. By the time of the study, structures and systems for the delivery of PESS had become embedded in children's experiences of school based physical activity.

During the same period the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in 2009 (NICE, 2009b) published recommended levels of activity for children's and young people's wellbeing. This initiated Government policy developments in community sport and physical activity in England, such as Sport England's strategy 2016-21 (Sport England, 2016b). These ongoing policy developments stimulated a growing body of research about physical activity. As a result, my literature search included a review of academic literature, dissertations in the field using the Ethos database, as well as an ongoing review of relevant sport, education and health policy documents for England.

To explore what was already known about the breadth of 7 to 11 years old children's physical activity experiences I carried out an initial literature review using the SPORTDiscus bibliographic database to search for peer reviewed journal articles. Similar

health and wellbeing concerns existed in most westernised nations. I therefore drew upon literature from a broad range of international sources, whilst being careful to acknowledge cultural differences that might impact children's experiences of physical activity differently than in England (Yan and McCullagh, 2004). I initially searched from 1990, using the key search words 'middle childhood' in combination with search words 'physical activity', 'sport'; 'physical education', 'active play' and 'the outdoors'. However, this provided very few studies which led me to widen the search term to 'children and young people' and prioritise studies that included children 7 to 11 years old, the English primary schooling years from 1990 to 2019.

Within the body of literature that I found, I also prioritised studies which used participatory research methods using the search terms 'children, young people and research' together with one or more of the following 'participatory', 'child-centred', whilst excluding the term 'early years' in order to focus upon middle childhood. The paucity of participatory research about physical activity (less than ten studies) in middle childhood led me to consider how children were positioned within sport and physical activity research. I briefly turned in parallel to childhood studies literature to illuminate the potential benefits of a participatory approach to studying children's physical activity.

Studies tended to address physical activity experiences in three different spaces and times. For example Rasmussen (2004) working with 5 to 12 years old Danish children identified these as:

1. Compulsory PE and structured School Sport;
2. Structured and un-structured community settings
3. Home.

I was conscious that in England children increasingly experienced extended school days (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018), for instance to support working parents to give wrap around childcare. This had distinctive physical activity space and time characteristics which were different to those outlined by Rasmussen (2004), so I identified a fourth space/time comprising:

4. Children's extended school days outside of curriculum time and in school play times to review unstructured activities in school beyond curriculum time.

These four spaces and times provided my framework for the review of literature of children's physical activity.

2.1 PE and structured School Sport (PESS)

In England, studies which investigated children's experiences of curriculum time and associated physical activity often tended to be framed by a physical education policy agenda. That agenda focused upon fulfilling the National PE and School Sport (PESS) strategic targets enshrined in the new PE National Curriculum (DfEd, 2013) as well as contributing to the sport and public health agenda. Physical Education appeared to be located within a crowded policy space and competing Sport, Education and Health discourses (Griggs and Ward, 2013)

A variety of studies endeavoured to understand how school-based interventions could encourage children to increase and sustain higher activity levels. These foregrounded how PESS helped children reach recommended activity levels and/or enhanced, increased or sustained children's participation in physical activity (Magnusson et al., 2011; Jenkinson, Naughton and Benson, 2012; Møller et al., 2014) outside and beyond school.

Whilst some studies suggested that PE lessons could provide periods of physical activity at appropriate levels of intensity (Lonsdale, Rosenkranz, Peralta, *et al.*, 2013) others concluded that PE lessons made an insignificant contribution to children's daily recommended hour of moderate and vigorous physical activity (MVPA) (Wood and Hall, 2015). In other words, although PE was a compulsory lesson, children were not necessarily motivated to participate in ways that engaged them in moderate or vigorous activity. One factor in this apparently contradictory picture was that the teacher was 'a major determinant of whether students engage in physical activity (PA) during physical education (PE)' (Jin, 2015, p. 54) and appeared to mediate children's self-regulated experience of PE. This led Starc and Strel (2012) to stress the importance of having

specialist PE teachers in order to achieve planned health outcomes of PE classes. Other researchers have reached similar conclusions. For example Bailey (2006) in his review of the PE&SS programme in England concluded:

‘interactions of teachers and coaches largely determine whether or not children and young people experience (these) positive aspects of PESS and whether or not they realize its great potential’ (2006, p. 399).

These concerns are picked up in studies of teacher training, for instance the knowledge and preparedness of primary school teachers to deliver a highly technique and skills orientated curriculum approach to teaching games (Ward and Griggs, 2011); and unchanging approaches to teaching Primary School PE which appears to emanate from embedded memes. Those memes have fixed the delivery of PE as the delivery of sport techniques emphasising the teaching of skills to a curriculum specification; taught by a range of personnel including outside sport coaches in an environment in which the specialist knowledge of a physical educationalist is not acknowledged; in which the idea that children are ‘busy, happy and good’ is a legitimate outcome of a PE experience as against genuine learning outcomes; and all conducted in a school setting in which the subject is less valued than academic subjects (Ward and Griggs, 2018)

Other studies measured the impact of PESS upon motivating children to be more active outside and beyond school. Some studies found that PE could stimulate children to be more active on days with PE lessons (Alderman *et al.*, 2012) and encourage positive attitudes towards physical activity in their leisure time (Chen and Hypnar, 2015). By contrast others found that PE lessons did not necessarily result in higher overall amounts of physical activity (Møller *et al.*, 2014) and children might be less active out of school on days on which they had PE. Furthermore, children attending sports schools whilst more active in school could be less active than their counterparts at non-specialist sport schools in their leisure time (Fairclough *et al.*, 2016). Some studies concluded that even positive experiences of PE did not necessarily inspire children to engage in physical activity beyond school or for sustained periods (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011).

In spite of research findings that suggested that children were uninspired by PE and were not necessarily very active, children widely cited fun and enjoyment as the primary motivation for participating in PE classes (Bailey, 2006). Those investigating sources of fun and enjoyment often explored it in relation to Self Determination Theory (SDT) of motivation. Higher levels of enjoyment and participation were seen where PE was delivered in such a way that children had choice and some agency over their PE experience, the opportunity to socialise with friends and a sense of mastery over the skills needed to participate in the lesson's activities (Stuntz and Weiss, 2010; Sebire *et al.*, 2013; Dishman *et al.*, 2015; Lorente, 2017). A number of PE interventions and models for the delivery of the PE curriculum developed to harness experiences of fun and enjoyment (Sidentop, 2002; Stolz and Pill, 2014; Lorente, 2017). For instance the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model (Kirk and MacPhail, 2002; Stolz and Pill, 2014) was based upon teaching skills in a games situation to develop a more holistic understanding of the game as well as promote enjoyment from playing the game. The Sport Education Model (SEM) (Sidentop, 2002) was underpinned by Self-Determination Theory of motivation (SDT). Key characteristics of the model were to increase enjoyment of PE by giving children time to bond socially in long-term teams and provide them with a choice of activities and ways to participate e.g. as officials as well as players. This arguably gave children a sense of autonomy over their participation. Existing initiatives had established competition experiences such as intra and inter schools which were structured to be unthreatening (Perlman and Karp, 2010; Jenkinson, Naughton and Benson, 2012). These measures also purportedly helped children operate within parameters where they felt competent to participate (Sidentop, 2002). However, experience of competition as a means of encouraging mastery of movement skills and providing sources of enjoyment, even within a sympathetic inclusive environment, remained problematic for many children (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007a).

In England increased focus and extended funding was given for School Sport (SS) programmes to support structured learning beyond curriculum time in new and existing voluntary school clubs, competitions and activities, in school breaks, lunchtimes and after

school (Harris, 2015). Simultaneously a coordinated national programme of intra and inter schools competitions from local to national level, was designed to provide the opportunity to experience competition for every child (DfEd, 2013). Some children, particularly those who perceived themselves as having mastery of appropriate sport skills, thrived in the competitive environment and enjoyed competing (Walters *et al.*, 2015). Boys were more likely than girls to fall into this category, which could be linked to boys' greater attraction to exertional characteristics of participation in sports. However for others, competition exposed their lack of confidence (Mandigo and Holt, 2002); highlighted their perceived or actual lack of skills and competence (Huang and Gao, 2008); their fitness to participate and associated concerns about body image when on view (Edwards *et al.*, 2016). Children were susceptible to embarrassment and the development of negative feelings towards the activities (Brunton *et al.*, 2003). For many participation became enjoyable 'when children were not forced to compete and win' (Allender, Cowburn and Foster, 2006, p. 829) and there was a focus on pursuit of a range of different activities for the fun and enjoyment of movement and being active (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2016). Simultaneously a focus upon extra-curricular time for physical activity through school sport extended children's school days and reduced time for children to pursue unstructured self-directed activity for enjoyment. Concerns were raised about over-scheduling children and young people (Mahoney, Harris and Eccles, 2006).

Following the 2012 London Games and continuing concerns about low activity levels, a range of initiatives were developed to embed short (10-15 min) physical activity breaks during lessons or during lunchtimes (e.g. 'Wake and Shake' and 'Take 10') as an 'important addition to physical education' (Harris, 2015, p. 8). Popular TV or cartoon characters led video classroom movement. Whereas PE and school sport were focused upon targeted learning outcomes and the achievement of physical literacy and the experience of competition, these short periods of physical activity were about fun and enjoyment. By removing complex learning outcomes associated with PESS, teachers could also focus upon fun. Teachers could develop shared experiences of enjoyable physical activity which enriched their day and their work with pupils, perhaps also reducing

children's perception that playfulness was associated only with activities where the teacher was absent (Howard, 2002).

Further classroom-based initiatives in recent years have started to embed physical activity into active learning environments (Aminian, Hinckson and Stewart, 2015; Schneller *et al.*, 2017). Studies measuring the impact of short activity sessions during the day have been inconclusive. Some showing beneficial impacts upon activity levels, fitness and health measures (Katz *et al.*, 2010) whilst others have shown that children compensated by becoming less active following interventions to increase activity (Cooper *et al.*, 2015; Ridgers *et al.*, 2015).

Literature reporting research associated with PESS reflected a tension surrounding the multiple responsibilities assigned to PESS to:

- Support “the promotion of healthy active lives” by encouraging children to achieve some of their daily activity minutes for wellbeing during their school day
- Assist in ‘build(ing) character and embed positive life values’ through the experience of competition
- Develop physical competence ‘to excel in a broad range of physical activities’ which would equip children to sustain active lifestyles for life

(Department for Education, 2013, p. 1)

This resulted in an emphasis within the literature upon the measurement of children's activity levels (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011; Grydeland *et al.*, 2013), which supported a view of children as objects of research . Other studies assessed the efficacy of activity interventions and models of PESS delivery in which children were engaged in giving feedback, most often through the use of questionnaires (Moore *et al.*, 2009; Lonsdale, Rosenkranz, Sanders, *et al.*, 2013) . In particular there was a focus upon how to maximise fun and enjoyment to encourage increased participation. This has led most recently to qualitative studies that have focused upon children's reported experiences of physical education. For instance, Coulter *et al.* found primary and post primary school aged

children's experiences of physical activity supported existing studies investigating children's motivations to participate in PESS (2020). PE which was experienced as meaningful was: fun and enjoyable, provided opportunities for social interaction, within children's motor competency and personally relevant through the provision of choice.

2.2 Beyond curriculum-time physical activity in school

Research has found that the agency of 7 to 11 years old children' to engage in self-organised physically active pursuits in their free-choice time, was restricted by age and maturity, actual and perceived vulnerability. Socioecological factors at individual, community and policy level shaped children's experiences and choice of physical activity in school playtimes and in clubs which provided child care wrapped around the school day (Ridgers et al., 2012). Time in extra-curricular activities could be viewed as paradoxical, when "free time" is spent in an institutional context, it is not experienced as quite free' (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 169). In many countries children's time had become increasingly structured, restricting the free time over which children had real free choice to choose their activities (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018). School playtimes continued to offer children the opportunity for self-organised activity (Powell, Woodfield and Nevill, 2015; Wood and Hall, 2015; Pawlowski et al., 2016) as well as voluntary participation in informally facilitated activities by peer or adult playground leaders.

As in studies of PE lessons, there was a body of research focused upon the health policy agenda to measure the contribution voluntary play time activities made to children's daily physical activity. Some identified school breaks as important potential contributors to daily activity targets (Bundy *et al.*, 2011; Ridgers *et al.*, 2012) whilst others were inconclusive or found no significant contribution (Powell, Woodfield and Nevill, 2015; Wood and Hall, 2015). Children also experienced play time activities at moderate or lower levels rather than the vigorous levels required of physical activity health and wellbeing targets. The period over which physical activity was sustained fell short of the recommended ten-minute bursts to contribute to desired health benefits (Wood and Hall, 2015).

Other studies investigated the motivations and barriers children experienced associated with being active during school breaks (Willenberg *et al.*, 2010; Bundy *et al.*, 2011; Powell, Woodfield and Nevill, 2015). Boys were more consistently active than girls (Ridgers, Fairclough and Stratton, 2010; Ridgers *et al.*, 2012) and engaged more frequently with outdoor play during school break times, particularly when playing football often dominating school playing field facilities (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015). In contrast girls typically adopted more sedentary pursuits and focused more upon socialising in playtimes (StreetGames and Sport England, 2015; Pawlowski *et al.*, 2016). Gender could be 'a barrier for children's self-organized play during recess' (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015, p. 286). However individual competence to participate could overturn these play time experiences. Skilled footballing girls could take the initiative to 'throw themselves into the games and spaces dominated by boys' and could be welcomed into games dominated by boys and unskilled boys could de-select themselves (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015, p. 285).

Children were encouraged to participate in physical activity when they experienced the support and perceived encouragement of others, such as friends, teachers or playground supervisors. Supervision (Bundy *et al.*, 2011) or even behaviour management strategies, such as how to deal with teasing in playtime to create safe environments for children (Kersey and Masterson, 2010), could improve children's playtime experiences and instil confidence in children to be more active. However adults' perceptions of risk could limit fun and enjoyment by placing restrictions upon children's self-organised play (Bundy *et al.*, 2011; Engelen *et al.*, 2013), over-structuring and removing the spontaneity of activities which children themselves created in imaginative, fluid playground games. Provision of sufficient (Ridgers, Fairclough and Stratton, 2010; D'Haese *et al.*, 2013), and varied (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2016) spaces including secluded spaces and indoor classrooms for less active children impacted upon children's playtime choices. Portable equipment, together with larger climbing equipment, playground markings with defined zones for different types of activity encouraged active playtimes (Barbour, 1999) and also encouraged children to engage in self-organised active play. School policies such as the length of playtime

periods (Edwards *et al.*, 2016) and inclement weather provision could limit or enable children to engage in a range of self-organised physical activities with friends.

A growing body of research highlighted that children were spending increasing time in school or other after-school institutionalised places largely designed, designated and controlled by adults (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018). Whilst supervised clubs provided opportunities for children to be active, there was a potential problem of over-programming children into organised activities, such that children experienced a paucity of time to pursue their own self-determined interests (Simoncini, 2009). Children expressed wishes to have more time to play with their parents and parents expressed guilt about not having that time (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018). Children were compliant in relinquishing agency to assist working parents and/or conform to the routines of their schooling. In this 'role' they were operating as part of their family unit and whilst they may have enjoyed such clubs and sessions, children did not necessarily identify these experiences as free play, but 'rather what they did when parents were (still) working' (Glenn, Knight and Holt, 2012). Children tended to comply and play within these structured environments in structured ways: 'children can see no necessity to overcome restrictions' (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012, p. 19) and in these situations could cease to be creative or imaginative potentially reducing their activity levels. What children chose to do within a structured space/time could be significantly different from what they chose to do when they had greater agency for instance in their free choice time at home.

2.3 Beyond school: structured and unstructured community physical activity

Children's experiences of community-based physical activity beyond school are likely to come from two distinct and contrasting sources; participation in sport specific clubs and programmes of coaching and participation in recreational multi-activity clubs and programmes. Both are typically available after school, during holidays and weekends in community and commercial recreation facilities. Both exhibited many features of after

school sport and care clubs but were distinguished by taking place in family time after both school and parental working hours.

Sport specific community clubs and programmes in England were characterised by the structure and system of a particular sport's coaching and competition programme. These extended many aspects of school sport experiences with a focus upon competition and performance even for recreational participation pursued primarily for relaxation, fun and enjoyment. A range of potential experiences and sources of enjoyment were identified. For instance children had the opportunity to socialise and gain psychological support from friends and coaches, and they could experience a sense of competence and experience a mastery-orientated learning environment (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007a).

Children's experiences of the community sport club /programme environment was enhanced by the presence of friends and supportive coaches (Butt *et al.*, 2011; Coulter and Woods, 2011; Kubayi, Toriola and Monyeke, 2013). Children who perceived themselves as competent, skilled performers could enjoy and have highly motivating experiences (Huang and Gao, 2008). However for some children, the structure and system of community sport could mitigate against fun and enjoyment and highly prescriptive sports programmes did not result in increased or sustained physical activity (Kuen, 2011; Gao, Podlog and Huang, 2013). The pressure of participating in performance sport, the rigor of training and of competition, competitively-orientated coaches, negative feedback and inappropriate psychosocial support could lead to negative experiences (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007a; Huang and Gao, 2008). Boys tended to find sources of enjoyment not only in competition but also in the physicality and effort of participation more readily than girls (Butt *et al.*, 2011).

In parallel with developments in PE&SS there had been a strong focus on the development of more participant-centred coaching practices over the last two decades to encourage children and young people to engage and maintain their participation in sport. For instance, Hagger *et al.* (2002) investigated the way in which key elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) impacted young people's self-determination to take

part in physical activity. TPB stated that people's intention to perform behaviours such as physical activity could be predicted by an individual's intentions and the individual's perceived behavioural control (PCB). PCB referred to the extent to which the individual believed they had control of the behaviour and the outcome of their behaviour. People's intentions were shaped by the individual's own attitude towards the behaviour and their perception of the social norms surrounding the behaviour (Icek, 1991). Hagger et.al. (2002) surveyed over a thousand 12-14 year olds in the UK using a self-assessment questionnaire and found young people's self-determined motivations needed positive attitudes towards physical activity and to feel in control of the physical activity to turn their self-determined motivation into actual participation. This led them to recommend that practitioners provide a choice of physical activities to assist young people to feel in control of their physical activity behaviours.

The Development Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) was another approach (Côté, 1999; Jean Côté, Baker, & Abernethy, 2007). The DMSP set out a broader framework for participation in sport using different pathways for children with different motivations for participation (Côté, Lidor and Hackfort, 2009). The DMSP recognised the need to sustain children's enjoyment and intrinsic motivation for taking part in sport not only through achievement of personal and elite performance but also through recreational participation. The model identified the importance of deliberate play in middle childhood (7-11 years) when children enter sport. During this, the sampling period, the model suggested children should be involved in a range of sports and deliberate play moving away from intense training for one specific sport. Deliberate play was characterized by Côté as a form of sporting activity that 'involved early developmental physical activities that were intrinsically motivating, provided immediate gratification, and were specifically designed to maximize enjoyment' (Jean Côté et al., 2007:185). Deliberate play continued in low amounts even after specialisation in a specific sport to pursue a performance pathway at 15 years. Furthermore a parallel recreational pathway provided for children who simply wanted to take part in a sport in which deliberate play remained dominant throughout the teenage years into adulthood (Côté, Baker and Abernethy, 2007). With this

model Côté highlights, as few others do, the importance of experiencing self-directed physical activity characteristic of play in childhood and characteristic of recreation in adulthood.

In contrast to structured sport clubs and programmes, community multi-activity clubs and programmes encouraged children to self-organise their activities facilitated, rather than coached by, activity leaders. The provision of spaces where adults did not structure but simply facilitated active play resulted in children increasingly choosing physical activity (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012). Multi-sport clubs and holiday activity programmes provided children with large amounts of space that accommodated noise and excited behaviours, safe areas for rough and tumble, novel equipment and a range of friends to engage in creating activities (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012). These environments stimulated self-directed unstructured creative activities. These findings highlighted the potential for engaging with children in their holiday activity spaces and times to investigate their lived experiences of free-choice physical activity in a first pilot study.

2.4 Home based physical activity

Home-based physical activity comprised activities either within the home and garden or out with family members and was characterised by active play and the outdoors. To be 'play' the activity must be chosen and directed by children themselves and it must be 'intrinsically motivated and valued for its own sake with no externally imposed outcomes' (Bergen, 2009; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2012). The term 'free' play within the literature emphasised this quality. Play was widely seen as natural and innate in children (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012). Play was also variously classified, for instance Glenn, Knight and Holt (2012) identified four categories of children's play comprising; movement focused play; creative/imaginative play; games and entertainment and social-relational activities, but physical activity is a common feature across play. Active play combined the features of play with moderate to vigorous physical activity which raised heart rate above the levels of day to day walking (Pellegrini and Smith, 1998).

Children's own perceptions of play were very broad (Brockman, Fox and Jago, 2011). Play experiences could also be concerned with 'movement, creativity, imagination, entertainment, sport or social activities – or combinations of all of these.' (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018, p. 107). In brief, play defined a state of mind as much as specific activity experiences. Children could see almost anything as an opportunity for play and could experience play almost anywhere, alone or with almost anyone as long as it was fun (Bergen, 2009; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2012).

In the home setting children could influence family choices and could exercise higher levels of agency and choice over their activity. The family/home-based activity setting comprised the home, garden and immediate curtilage where children were able to play with only light-touch supervision. Further afield nature-based outdoor activities in the countryside, parks and playgrounds, tended to take place during holidays and on outings with family members.

Chawla (2015) suggested that the number of studies of the impact of nature on children's well-being was relatively small compared to those involving adults and that more research was needed to address how children and their parents are affected by nature. However nature-based outdoor physical activity, was linked with increased physical activity (Clements, 2004; Sanders, Feng, Paul P Fahey, *et al.*, 2015), self-reported experiences of wellbeing (Liu *et al.*, 2015) and healthy communities (Chawla, 2015). Family based outdoor activity was even less studied but there was emerging research interest linked to family well-being through activity holidays; which provided unmediated family time for children with parents and made memories integral to family bonding (Pomfret and Varley, 2019)

An American study of primarily female early teenagers (and parents) investigating how to connect families with the outdoors found that young people could be more active in the outdoors (Flett *et al.*, 2010) and in a study of American 6-12 years olds the majority enjoyed having space to be active, to play ball games, cycle and use playground equipment (Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2008, p. 413). Having friends to play with was also a

motivator to use the outdoors. Veitch et.al (2008) for instance reported that older children (11-12 years) valued opportunities for independent unsupervised play with friends; the social aspects of playing being more important than the available equipment. By contrast playground equipment that was not challenging enough could make playgrounds boring and unattractive and younger children were influenced by positive aesthetics of playgrounds and the availability of activity features such as equipment in the play space e.g. basketball hoops (Greer, Castrogivanni and Marcello, 2016).

Fun and enjoyment came from enjoyment of nature (Flett *et al.*, 2010); connecting with nature and the natural environment such as 'being able to hide in the bushes, climb trees and play with their pets' (Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2008, p. 413). They connected with the outdoors through competitive and challenge experiences whilst their parents were more attracted to the restorative aspects of being outdoors (Flett *et al.*, 2010). Children mentioned enjoying going to the park with their father as an opportunity to 'spend time together' (Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2008, p. 413). Using an ecological model for analysis Veitch et.al., (2008) identified a range of intrapersonal, social and environmental factors influences upon children's outdoor free play.

Juxtaposed against the many benefits identified in the active play literature, were suggestions that "young children's rights to play (had) been infringed". Over recent years there had been a relegation of 'children's play opportunities to the edges of their day' by highly structured school and teaching systems which also intruded upon children's time (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018, pp. 112–3). This was supported by qualitative studies, for instance by a cross-generational study with mothers and their children (Clements, 2004). This found that mothers recalled playing outdoors as children more often than their own children. Time pressures because of busy family life together with safety concerns were cited as reasons for this perceived intergenerational reduction in children's outdoor play time. Similar explanations were found in studies highlighting reduced outdoor nature-based experiences (e.g. Skår and Krogh, 2009). Research tended to focus upon active play as a precursor to future active lifestyles. Discussion and

provision for children's play in the literature was framed as a vehicle for learning (Bergen, 2009), social and cognitive development (Gray, 2011), a source of physical activity for health and wellbeing (Brockman, Fox and Jago, 2011), mirroring the discourse of PESS for personal development. In other words, there was a focus on play outcomes other than the experience and enjoyment of the physicality of play and being active itself. As Gleave and Cole-Hamilton point out, viewed in this way 'we are in danger of losing sight of the essence of play as intrinsically motivated behaviour' (2012, p. 3) and would fail to acknowledge and prioritise the experiences that drive children's active play behaviours. The tendency for more structured school experiences were reflected in structured PESS by the time children reach middle childhood years. An opportunity exists for studies of children's active play to provide valuable insights into children's chosen lived experiences of physical activity for its own sake.

Home and/or family-based free active play provided children the greatest autonomy to shape their own physical activity experiences. In this freedom, playfulness dominated active play linked with creativity and innovation, including physical spontaneity alongside cognitive and social spontaneity, manifest joy and a sense of humour (Bergen, 2009). There was a merging and melding of 'movement focused play; creative/imaginative play; games and entertainment and social-relational activities' (Glenn et al. 2012, p.190-194). This play was tactile and characteristic of the rough and tumble play of middle childhood (Gupta, 1994). Children's active play was associated with sources of fun and enjoyment from raised affective states, which were as much about the joy and humour of the social interactions incorporating imagination as the physicality of the experience.

In summary this body of literature was characterised by relatively little focus upon the formative period of middle childhood compared to adolescence (historically the greatest drop out from sport participation) or early childhood (focused often upon the developmental value of active play). There was a preoccupation and finding across research that children's physical activity was generally underpinned and motivated by fun

and enjoyment. However sources of fun and enjoyment were less well understood (Wellard, 2013).

The literature review confirmed Wellard's (2013) view that relatively little research focused upon the lived experiences of children's physical activity. Interrelated UK Government agendas had dominated the way physical activity had been framed and discussed. This had led to particular physical activity discourses. By this I mean particular gatherings of knowledge and conceptualisations which used particular language to self-perpetuate understandings of children's physical activity in a particular way (Layder, 1994). What this did was to appropriate 'a command of knowledge' (Layder, 1994, p. 97) of children's physical activity and this in turn tended to acquire a power imbalance in favour of those who commanded that knowledge. In other words, policy agendas, framed by adults, have led to discourses that conceptualised children's physical activity:

- For the achievement of optimal health and wellbeing
- To support personal and social development from experiencing the benefits of competitive sport
- As a way of supporting academic achievement by transferring qualities such as resilience learned through sport participation to academic studies.

2.5 Socioecological and sociocultural studies of children's physical activity

Socioecological and sociocultural factors were frequently included in studies examining children's motivation to participate whether as part of PESS, extracurricular, community or home-based physical activity. In addition, a large and diverse number of studies focused specifically upon socioecological and sociocultural factors which impacted children's participation in physical activity. Socioecological factors are understood here to mean the 'multiple levels of influences' on physical activity behaviours 'including intrapersonal, interpersonal, organisational, community and public policy levels' (Eime *et al.*, 2015, p. 684). Socioecological factors are often portrayed as layered influences starting with the

influence of immediate family, then children's peer group; moving on to the impact of the community in which children live e.g. their school and home neighbourhood; the local and national governing policies shaping the communities in which they live (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). Different layers of influences are seen to interact in complex and different ways (Casey *et al.*, 2009). Some studies focused upon socioecological approaches to provision of physical activity for instance linking school sports clubs with community clubs enabling children to seamlessly pursue their interests more widely (Cardon *et al.*, 2012).

Simultaneously, other studies focused upon sociocultural factors. Sociocultural factors are here understood as characteristics of people and their lives into which they are born. I adopt Jaeschke's (2017) definition of sociocultural determinants of physical activity as community or society 'attitudes, beliefs and values ... that might have a powerful effect on the behaviour of individual members of a community group' (2017, p. 2). Sociocultural factors include race, ethnicity and cultural background; disability; gender; socio-economic status and social class.

It was important to consider both socioecological and sociocultural factors because each impacts children's experiences and the way they develop their conceptualisations of physical activity in different ways. In addition, socioecological and sociocultural factors associated with physical activity behaviours interact in complex ways. For instance, the race and ethnicity impacts parental attitudes and family physical activity behaviours (Edwards, 2019) but also shapes participation at community level (Pearce, 1999; Whiting *et al.*, 2017). Studies frequently identified multilevel, connected factors influencing children and young people's physical activity (Barr-Anderson *et al.*, 2017). Factors particularly relevant to this study included parental influence, family and home settings; the impact of socio-economic status and class; culture, race and ethnicity; and gender upon children's levels of and motivations for physical activity.

For O'Connor *et al.* (2012), a socioecological approach to teaching changed the focus of PE from learning skills and tactics of games and learning about health and fitness to a focus upon exploring the embodied nature of physical activity. Others applied the

socioecological model to home and community physical activity. For instance, focusing on physical activity facilities (Powell, Slater and Chaloupka, 2004) and the nature of the home environment (Tandon *et al.*, 2012). American teenagers physical activity increased where informal outdoor spaces, parks and beaches, cycle paths and formal facilities such as public swimming pools were available. (Powell, Slater and Chaloupka, 2004). In lower socioeconomic status (SES) homes 6-11 year olds had less access to activity equipment and were subject to more restrictions for physical activity but had more access to media in their bedrooms (Tandon *et al.*, 2012). Children's physical activity levels were impacted by children's independent mobility as a function of their urban/suburban home neighbourhood (Stone *et al.*, 2014).

Family, particularly parents, impacted strongly upon children's physical activity. For instance, Birchwood *et al.* (2008) identified across all sociodemographic groups:

‘family, and more specifically (to) the cultural dimensions of the family environments, as the primary source of predispositions to take part in sport’ (2008, p. 283).

Parental influence impacted more strongly on children with more active parents than children with inactive parents (Welk, Wood and Morss, 2003). Across a review of 34 studies of children and adolescents, parental support strongly encouraged children's physical activity levels (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006). Some found children's physical activity levels were higher in families where parents were more active (Xiao Lin Yang, Telama and Laakso, 1996; Wagner *et al.*, 2004) whereas others were inconclusive showing mixed results for correlations between parental activity levels and children's activity levels (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006). This suggested that parental impact was not simply about role modelling and could include other factors such as parental education, family practices of shared activities, genetic inheritance or the impact of being part of an ethnic minority (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006). Parental participation with their children was seen to support youth participation (Flynn *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore participation was seen to provide opportunities beyond the physical activity together to provide parent-child bonding opportunities (Pomfret and Varley, 2019). Some evidence

was found for mother-daughter relationships supporting PA; fathers' activity levels were positively correlated with children's activity, particularly sons; but mother-son correlations were less consistent (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006).

Family socioeconomic status shapes the resources available to support children's physical activities. There was strong interest in researching the impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on a range of other factors impacting children's physical activity. Findings were varied for instance, parental involvement was a significant positive indicator of young French adolescents' participation in extra-curricular physical activity and was not affected by SES (Wagner *et al.*, 2004); fathers' activity levels were a stronger influence on children's activity levels than SES (Xiao Lin Yang, Telama and Laakso, 1996). However, Seabra *et al.* found 'high SES children were more likely to perceive their parents as positive role models' (2013, p. 320) and higher SES children reported greater enjoyment of physical activity. Higher level SES was associated with children attributing greater importance to physical activity than lower socioeconomic status counterparts (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006).

'High and medium socioeconomic status children perceived physical activity participation as of greater importance than did low-socioeconomic status children' (Seabra *et al.*, 2013, p. 320).

Some studies found that higher levels of SES were associated with higher levels of physical activity and participation (Santos, Esculcas and Mota, 2004; Peralta *et al.*, 2019). However, other studies did not find conclusive correlations between SES and levels of physical activity for young children (Kelly *et al.*, 2006) and adolescents (Stalsberg and Pedersen, 2010). Factors such as SES were difficult to measure (Love, Adams and van Sluijs, 2017) and complex to define. This often led to inconsistencies across studies which could contribute to inconclusive findings (Stalsberg and Pedersen, 2010).

An international systematic review of studies which investigated equity factors impacting children's participation in physical activity interventions identified a gap in research.

Gender was most researched 'with substantially fewer focusing on BMI, SES, ethnicity,

place of residence or religion' (Love, Adams and van Sluijs, 2017, p. 6) . However, the review concluded:

'There is growing evidence that certain subgroups such as girls, children with disabilities, and those from minority ethnic groups and low SES families or neighbourhoods have lower levels of physical activity than their counterparts' (2017, p. 7).

Concerns about the need to change this situation were reflected in PE studies for instance the need to reconceptualise PE to reflect the youth voice in terms of different races (Harrison and Belcher, 2006), genders and social class:

'the field of physical education needs to open and embrace a complicated dialogue across cultures, histories, individual identities and ways of being' (Azzarito and Solomon, 2005, p. 43)

Studies which investigated the impact of ethnicity upon children's physical activity demonstrated lower levels of engagement by minority ethnic groups (Vu *et al.*, 2006; Barr-Anderson *et al.*, 2017) which was attributed for instance to "cultural, linguistic, and accessibility barriers" (Pearce, 1999, p. 8). A comparative study of elementary school children showed American Caucasian (AC) children were more active and more strongly associated with expectancy-value beliefs and health-related quality of life (HRQOL) measures than their African American (AA) peers (Gu *et al.*, 2019).

Ethnicity also impacted other factors associated with physical activity participation (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006). For instance, Hispanic and Asian girls reported lower levels of physical activity than other cultural groups in a study of American teenagers (Wolf *et al.*, 1993). There was very little research that investigated ethnicity and being outdoors in nature (Fatinikun, 2020). However in their Landscapes Review Report, The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) stated that BAME communities were among groups who least visited the countryside;' only 20% Visibly Minority Ethnic (VME) children went out into green spaces weekly compared to white,

middle-class children'; and Asian and ethnic minority children were less likely to play unsupervised outside (Glover, 2019). Motivations for the use of outdoor spaces for physical activity were found to differ between racial and ethnic minority groups (Whiting *et al.*, 2017). Racial practices of fathering children in sport involved the transmission of ethnic and racial identity and values (Edwards, 2019).

Girls' physical activity participation research, unlike other strands, demonstrated high levels of consistency. For instance, studies consistently confirmed girls were less active and participated less frequently in PA than boys (Santos, Esculcas and Mota, 2004; Vu *et al.*, 2006; McGovern *et al.*, 2020). Concerns about perceived appropriateness of participation and lack of competence were particularly associated with girls' rather than boys' physical activity participation (Solmon *et al.*, 2003; Slater and Tiggemann, 2010; Slingerland *et al.*, 2014). As with other strands of studies, gender was impacted by other factors. For instance, Seabra *et al.* (2013) reported high SES girls liked more vigorous physical activity than their lower SES counterparts.

In summary, socioecological factors particularly relevant to this study included parental influence, family and home settings together with the sociocultural impact of gender. Studies investigated the impact and interconnectivity of socioecological and socio-cultural factors upon the whole range of children's physical activity experiences. Family, in particular parents generally had the greatest impact upon children's physical activity experiences, choices and behaviours. This was not only as facilitators of children's activity but also as role models of physical activity attitudes and behaviours. Gender studies consistently highlighted girls' lower levels of engagement than boys' across all strands of physical activity. Children from different ethnic minority groups faced a variety of different challenges impacting their participation. The impact of socio-economic status remained inconclusive. Most significantly, studies focused upon investigating external socioecological and sociocultural factors impacting children's physical activity demonstrated the complexity of the environment in which individual children experience physical activity.

2.6 The lack of participatory research into children's physical activity

The effect of this overall approach to children's physical activity was that research focused upon assessing the stated outcomes of children's physical activities in public policy discourses and the factors which impacted the achievement of those outcomes. Studies tended to treat children as objects or subjects of research to be measured and their behaviours assessed. For instance, studies measured children's fitness and activity levels often using accelerometry (Brockman, Jago and Fox, 2010; Eather, Morgan and Lubans, 2011). Studies often assessed children's enjoyment (Moore *et al.*, 2009) and motivation levels associated with particular interventions designed to encourage increased activity (Brockman, Jago and Fox, 2011; Butt *et al.*, 2011). Relatively little research used participatory approaches in which children were empowered to share in decision making about research design, the formulation of relevant research questions and the whole conduct of research. Children were primarily engaged in decision making, if at all, in the development of data collection methods, but rarely for instance in the analysis of their data (Nind, 2011).

Participatory research approaches and methods are widely debated in fields of research involving children, for instance sociology of childhood and childhood studies. There are a range of participatory research models for instance Urquhart and Mason's (2001) framework of models of children's participatory research. Participatory research shares a number of key characteristics:

- The valuing of children's views of the world, the way they construct their knowledge and understanding of the world and phenomena in it
- Recognition of children as agentic social actors capable of participating fully in research

- The responsibility of the adult researcher to facilitate children's participation in research, for instance in using research methods that are accessible and appropriate to children's skills and understanding
- The sharing of power between the adult researcher and child participant in the design and conduct of research.

The adoption of participatory approaches to research about children's physical activity could lead to new insights and potentially alternative discourses of physical activity. I went on to investigate the available literature which would enable me to address these issues, beginning with the positioning of children as active social agents in their own lives.

2.7 Children as active agents in their lives and in research

In England as children were withdrawn from the labour force, a romanticised image of childhood arose where children became objects to be cared for, nurtured and shaped (Layard, Layard and Dunn, 2009; Mayall, 2012). This tended to frame childhood as a period of socialisation focused upon children as 'becomings' rather than as 'beings' (Qvortrup, 1994) or as 'not yet adults' (Mayall, 2003 p13) and therefore lacking skills, knowledge and understanding to operate in the world. Consequently, little recognition was given to knowledge and understandings that children may have to offer in their current state and the unique viewpoints that they may have as children. For some, this view of children and childhood had led to children's socialisation being wrested by adults (Mayall, 2003; Corsaro, 1997) and their lives being dominated by adults, who maintained authority and power and perpetuated an authoritative public mind set over them (Mayall, 2012). Mayall (2003) for instance argued that the UK Government's 21st century education policy introduction of widespread testing had reinforced the idea of the child as not being trusted to learn. Parallels could be drawn in the way in which children have been encouraged to develop their physical activity habits framed by health and wellbeing targets and a complex set of national curriculum physical education learning outcomes.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), initiated a movement for children's emancipation, in pursuit of their right to have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them. From the late 20th century a new sociology of childhood with fresh approaches to understanding childhood and socialisation gained influence. For example, a new strand of Childhood Studies had become established, recognising the valid and valuable contributions that children could make to research areas of children's lives in which they had an interest, reframing ideas about how one might conduct research with children. Children's roles as social agents in their own development and socialisation was acknowledged and some took this further to highlight the collective role that children could take, participating in society in creative, collaborative ways (James, 2010). Children contributed not only to their own socialisation but also to their communities, to 'both social stability and social change' (Corsaro, 1997 p.xi). Rather than passively receiving knowledge and understanding from adults to adapt and internalise, children appropriated, reinvented and reproduced knowledge and experiences (Corsaro, 1997). Viewed in this way children's socialisation took place in shared dialogue with adults accepting that children actively contributed to cultural change, reducing adult-child power imbalances.

Such cultural change was however slow to progress, some suggesting that it was not in adult's interest to share power and encourage cultural change (Mayall, 2012). Similarly, structures and systems of children's physical education and sport provision in the UK appeared to have created an inertia for change. A traditional view of childhood continued to be reflected in policy making and practices. Those shaping children's physical activity experiences purported to recognise the need for children to be heard (Public Health England, 2015); for the views of pupils, staff and parents to be reflected in curriculum development (Chrichton, 2015; Harris, 2015); and in the provision of physical activity opportunities which were relevant to children and young people (Future Foundation, 2015). Notwithstanding, the early 21st century was characterised by a series of targets for daily activity in England. For instance there was the introduction of a National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) and in 2016 the suggestion for physical fitness testing in PE resisted by afPE as: 'dull, dreary and dreaded, especially by the very children whom

we want to be more active.’ (Harris, J., 2015, p.16). All of these targets and interventions prompted a view of children needing to be controlled, directed and tested (Mayall, 2012). If viewed as active ‘social agents’ shaping their own lives children may, however, provide different insights into their physical activity experiences.

Within childhood studies generally, there had been a dramatic growth in activities related to children’s participation in research over the previous two decades (Thomas, 2007). Some researchers claimed that PE research was moving towards studies which were beginning to position ‘students as active participants in the research process’ (Enright and O’Sullivan, 2012). In this Literature Review little evidence was found of participatory research. By this I mean studies in which adult researchers worked with research participants to share or give them power to shape the design and conduct of the research.

Small pockets of research were found in the field of Youth Studies which used participatory research models. For instance, Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches were used to engage with young people to ascertain their attitudes towards community sport provision (Enright and O’Sullivan, 2012) and to investigate older teenage girls’ self-identified barriers to participation in physical activity and PE (Enright and O’Sullivan, 2010). Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) models (Goh *et al.*, 2009; Jacquez, Vaughn and Wagner, 2013) engaged young people to work with adult researchers to identify and define problems within their communities and then work together to research and implement solutions. Young people acted as coresearchers or led research in each of these models, facilitated by the adult researcher. As coresearchers young people were empowered to identify issues they wished to research and were then facilitated to shape and conduct research choosing their preferred methods.

Other studies offered young people and children a choice of research methods which were appropriate in relation to the skills and capabilities children and young people brought to participate in the research. Participation in research was generally associated with data collection and often creative in nature for instance using photography, drawing

or oral methods of generating data such as individual qualitative interviews or focus groups. Creative methods of data generation and analysis were combined in multi-methods research such as Photovoice (Wang, 2008; Rivard and Mitchell, 2013) to explore young adolescent's perceptions of physical activity from participants' photographs and photo-elicited discussion (Walia and Leipert, 2012). Multi-methods based upon children drawing, making narratives and contributing to qualitative interviews were used as tools to evaluate experiences of the Sport Education Model of PE and Soccer (MacPhail and Kinchin, 2004; Mowling, Brock and Hastie, 2006). Meanwhile Clark's (2004) Mosaic approach to research with young children recognised the ability of even young children to participate fully in research and was applied to children's exploration of their spaces to play (Clark and Moss, 2005).

These rare examples of studies using participatory methods demonstrated the capacity of children and young people to identify research interests and contribute to the design and development of research which was relevant to their lived experiences and world view. However, physical activity studies using participatory research tended to focus upon 'psychosocial and environmental factors associated with physical activity in young people' and also upon 'children's involvement in exercise and sport, rather than in physical activity as more broadly defined' (Mulvihill and Rivers, 2015, p. 167). Notwithstanding these pockets of research, children, particularly in middle childhood, generally appeared to be viewed as subjects of research, passive 'becomings' who were 'not yet adult' (Qvortrup, 1994), whose experiences of physical activity needed to be measured and assessed rather than collaboratively discovered. Little research provided the opportunity for children's own voices to be heard talking about the lived experiences of their chosen physical activity or involved in shaping how research was conducted. If we are seeking to produce new knowledge, then different research methods are required. One such approach has been phenomenological approaches which have grown in interest over the last decade from three strands of inquiry: the framing of PE as an embodied experience and also from studies of adult athletes' experiences of participation in performance sport

(Enright and O'Sullivan, 2012) and dancers' experience (Bailey and Pickard, 2010; Purser, 2018).

2.8 Theoretical approaches and the growth of phenomenological studies of embodied physical activity

Rhodes et al.'s (2019) review of four dominant approaches to the study of physical activity behaviour maps developing theoretical approaches to the study of children's physical activity. The review reveals recent development of phenomenological studies framing physical activity as an embodied experience. Within this review of literature focused upon revealing children's lived experience of free-choice physical activity, SDT and socioecological theoretical frameworks were the most commonly applied. Small bodies of research have developed using a phenomenological approach to the study of children's physical activity, PE, organised sport and dance.

2.8.1 The phenomenology and lived experiences of PE

Over the last 40 years there has been sporadic interest in researching the lived experience of PE (Brown and Payne, 2009) but only in the most recent years has it gained significant growth of interest. Studies of the lived experiences of PE have tended to be approached from a viewpoint emphasising the philosophical importance of a phenomenological approach to PE led by teacher educators of physical educationalists. Internationally, teacher educators in physical education championed an existential phenomenological approach to the teaching of PE. For instance in Australia Arnold (1988) foregrounded the meaning of movement in the teaching of PE; framing the PE experience as providing meaning 'about, through and in' movement. This work foregrounded Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological view of the role of corporeal movement and embodiment as a platform for learning. Physical education was seen to benefit the whole person as an embodied being (Stolz, 2013). Arnold's (1988) work led to studies which explored the extent to which these ideas had been fully realised in curriculum developments (Brown, 2008, 2013; Stolz and Thorburn, 2017).

Slightly later in Canada, Connolly focused upon 'lived experience, intersubjectivity, and insiders' stories' (1995, p. 25) as three sensitising concepts that described a phenomenological approach to PE. Connolly (1995) was one of the first to show interest in gathering children's descriptions of their experiences of physical activity as a way of informing a more somatic approach to the teaching of PE covering both mainstream and special population students. By listening to children. she says: 'perhaps we might reconsider what we mean by "fun", "good," and "success"' (p.30). Analysing descriptions of movement experiences, Connolly concludes that 'doers do indeed have a stake in their doing, in their experiences' (p.35), i.e. a role in understanding movement from doing. She champions the practice of engaging children in reflection about their movement experiences:

'Eidetic features are not abstractions but are qualities of lived experiences, which, when made explicit, can be used heuristically.' (p.37)

Recent interest in the phenomenology of PE in the UK, is strongly linked to Whitehead's (1990) work recommending the value of a phenomenological approach to the study of PE and an embodied approach to the teaching of PE e.g. (Shorman, 1999). Whitehead's seminal thesis on the implications of the views of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty underpinned her embodied approach to the teaching of physical education (Whitehead, 1987) disputing the Cartesian separation of body and mind which posited separate ways of experiencing the world. Whitehead concluded that children needed not only to acquire physical skills and knowledge but also aesthetic, kinaesthetic, social and emotional appreciation of movement. She further linked this to enjoyment and physical literacy. Enjoyment was experienced when a child gained general mastery of movement as an embodied experience and in so doing children became physically literate. Physical literacy referred to the simultaneous 'appreciation of our surroundings, and our realisation of our capacities' (Whitehead, 1990), connecting with the world both physically and cognitively. Notwithstanding the contribution that Whitehead's (1987) research made to the teaching of physical education, research into children's experiences of PESS in England continued

to focus more strongly upon public policy agendas of health and well-being and the measurement of children's physical activity levels and motivations for participation (see section 2.1). She and other physical educationalists have continued to make the case for physical literacy. For instance a special issue compilation of contemporary thinking elaborated the value of fostering physical literacy from a range of developmental and sociocultural perspectives, for the development of individual confidence, knowledge and understanding and the intrinsic value of a physically literate life (Whitehead, Durden-Myers and Pot, 2018). For Whitehead, the framing of PE as a holistic embodied experience, based upon Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenological (1962) view of the world, underpinned the way children formed their views of physical activity and their own physical literacy. Furthermore, children's views were built on their previous experiences. Thus arguing PE should be placed at the core of children's education preparing them to engage in a physically active life (Pot, Whitehead and Durden-Myers, 2018). Shoreman (1999) applies Whitehead philosophical framework to the investigation of the nature of 5-6 year olds' PE experiences in relation to the concept of achieving physical literacy and being in harmony with the world. She identifies a dominant emotional dimension in children's stories of PE and seeks to relate their PE experiences to her own definition of Whitehead's concept of harmony as well-being. Shorman concludes in agreement with Whitehead that:

'PE was not just a physical experience for the children. They did not separate out the physical aspect of the experience from the emotional, social and cognitive dimensions of their beings.' (1999, p. 278).

Lloyd (2016) also took a physical literacy approach to explore physical education with Canadian High School students. Phenomenological observation and investigation of students' experiences of a voluntary climbing programme led Lloyd to conclude that such an approach could broaden teachers' perceptions of students' learning in PE.

With a few exceptions (e.g. Kollen, 1981; Wessinger, 1994; Connolly, 1995) therefore, key studies in the field placed emphasis upon a philosophical phenomenological reframing of

PE (Kirk, 2013; Standal and Engelsrud, 2013). 'The stories of doers is an underexplored area in physical education' (Connolly, 1995, p. 30). The focus of these studies was on the re-positioning of the teaching of the subject and its educational value rather than the application of phenomenological approaches to study the lived experiences of PE (Brown and Payne, 2009). There was a sense that physical educationalists needed to respond to the challenging range of public policy outcomes placed upon PE and the importance of PE for the 'physical, affective and cognitive development of young people' (Green, 2015, p. 18), if those outcomes were to be realised (Thorburn and Stolz, 2015).

More recently there has been a concerted revival of interest in children's lived experiences of PE (Brown and Payne, 2009). Whilst teacher educator interests can be seen underpinning the phenomenology of PE, (Shorman, 1999; Fitzpatrick and Fitzpatrick, 2018; Coulter *et al.*, 2020; Lynch and Sargent, 2020) studies go beyond the philosophical considerations. Ethnographic studies of lived experiences of PE as well as phenomenological studies probed the embodied and lived experiences of PE; and the meaning of physical activity. Studies investigate general and special populations of children's lived experiences of PE and compare experiences of PE with other forms of physical activity.

The key findings of studies investigating children's lived experiences of physical activity using phenomenological research approaches echoed the findings of other studies (see sections 2.1-2.5). For instance, experiences of fun and enjoyment from PE were about feeling refreshed and physical activity providing a break from academic subjects, a positive relationship with the teacher and 'feeling good about themselves' (Na, 2012, p. 49). Meaningful experiences of PE for Higher Education PE students were seen as: fun containing elements of delight; combining fun and challenge; the development of motor competency which was personally relevant; and activity which was socially and personally relevant (Lynch and Sargent, 2020).

The universal reason for children taking part in PE and physical activity, particularly sport, was intrinsic fun (Shorman, 1999). Boys and girls who considered themselves less active

not only cited the intrinsic fun of an activity but also being outside and being with friends as related sources of enjoyment (Coulter *et al.*, 2020). However, Shorman (1999) also encountered children who preferred a sense of peacefulness they experienced when working alone; working harder, untroubled by other children being silly, and working on their own ideas. In some studies teachers were a positive contributor to fun and enjoyment (Na, 2012) whilst in others teachers were not associated with sources of fun and enjoyment because of the compulsory nature of PE as something simply to be got on with (Coulter *et al.*, 2020).

Positive embodied experiences generally emerged from the literature as being created by a complexity of factors. The sense of 'feeling good' in PE was a personally mediated experience which related to students' own assessments of their performance rather than for instance the act of scoring or contributing to winning (Wessinger, 1994). Helping others, achieving personal goals and contributing to team wins contributed to feeling good in Na's (2012) study of ten 12-15 years old student experiences of PE and physical activity. Performing well, particularly when this was associated with winning, was associated with physical competence which was rewarded with raised social status and friendships amongst peers and feeling good (Hills and Hills, 2007) linking students' fun and enjoyment to their personal physical and social capital. Na concluded that: 'physical education classes generated internal positive emotion and outward positive action which was towards others' (2012, p. 53). Furthermore, students actively pursued pleasant emotional experiences of PE to promote their own emotional development. Recognition of the personal mediation of experiences revealed children's need for choice to provide a variety of activities rather than a continuous focus upon competitive team sports which appeared to dominate the curriculum (Coulter *et al.*, 2020). Competence to participate in PE could impact on children's enjoyment and engagement in PE, particularly in a competitive environment when the challenge of the activity became too hard resulting in feelings of pressure from more competent performers and loss of confidence (Coulter *et al.*, 2020). Shorman (1999) found that finding PE tasks too hard featured in some 5-6 years old pupils' negative experiences of PE. Actual and anticipated discomfort or pain

during PE lessons arose from the effort and complexity of changing clothes; cold activity spaces; noisiness of their classmates; finding the task hard, uncomfortable or even painful. These negative experiences were remembered and anticipated for future PE lessons.

Some, often the more active and more competent found that competition contributed positively to fun and enjoyment by providing meaning to PE. These children valued competition and the experiences of winning. Challenge (not necessarily associated with competition) was a source of fun and enjoyment and lack of challenge could provide less meaningful PE experiences. However, this was not the case for others. For instance, some young people suggested that more meaningful experiences in PE could have been achieved focusing on everyone playing together in more fun games rather than competitive games (Coulter *et al.*, 2020).

Phenomenological studies of experiences of PE for special populations included the experiences of children from different socio-economic backgrounds and classes, different cultural backgrounds and ethnic minority students, girls, disabled young people and those experiencing obesity. Many of the same themes highlighted in the experiences of general populations of children and young people were identified in studies of special populations. However, additional themes were also identified such as the impact of cultural differences, and disability upon embodied experiences of physical activity.

Studies investigating the impact of culture and ethnicity upon experiences of physical education showed some students, particularly Muslim girls, experienced stereotyping and marginalisation due to their ethnic or cultural backgrounds, (Thorjussen and Sisjord, 2018). For instance the embodiment of religious faiths and cultural perspectives eroded Muslim girls' senses of safety in the PE space (Benn, Dagkas and Jawad, 2011).

Research with girls transitioning from primary to secondary school revealed a pattern of negative influences on entering secondary school around four themes describing their experiences comprising: Physical Activity Opportunities; Environment; Sense of Self when Active; Individual Issues (Knowles, 2009). The fun and enjoyment of embodied

experiences of PE and extracurricular physical activity were seen to change during this transition. Gendered understanding of embodiment on entering secondary school, underpinned by health and obesity discourses, had a negative impact upon girls (Windram-Geddes, 2013). This led Windram-Geddes (2013) to recommend a reframing of health and gender policy and pedagogical discourses to provide a space for girls' PE and physical activity which would encourage girls to engage in a more positive relationship with their bodies and engagement in PE and PA.

In a study with sixteen 8-11 year old children with cerebral palsy 'Enjoying the feeling of being physically activity', 'Being capable', 'Feeling of togetherness', 'Being aware it is good for me' and 'Using available opportunities' were themes describing their experiences of participating in physical activity. Whilst 'Getting tired and experiencing pain', 'Something being wrong with my body', 'Being dependent on others', 'Not being good enough' and 'Missing available opportunities' were themes describing barriers to participation. As might be expected there were striking similarities with general population studies in the foregrounding of enjoyment and having fun with family and friends and a sense of capability supporting student's positive participation experiences and concerns about not being capable as barriers (Lauruschkus, Nordmark and Hallström, 2015).

Studies comparing the lived experiences of PE and other physical activity found that the PE environment could inhibit positive experiences. For instance, American high school students who were 'into movement' found the natural highs they experienced outside their PE experience were nearly impossible within PE classes. The model of physical activity in PE did not allow for any individual ownership of the PE experience. PE was experienced as restrictive, a means to an end; causing them to do what was needed; leading to boredom over time and to withdrawal; (Kollen, 1981). At primary school age, some children's experiences were marred by poor behaviour of others and Shorman (1999) identified themes in children's stories of their PE lessons about 'appropriate behaviour' which echoed the restrictive experience of the high school students. There were a clear set of rules for behaviour in PE class and keen pupils suffered boredom of waiting whilst

children who didn't conform and wasted their PE time were taken to task. Children mentioned anticipating being 'told off' in PE for doing things wrong and the concept of choice during PE classes was mitigated by the overall sense of social control of the school setting and the directional tone of the teaching. American adolescent girls reported the presence of boys being a barrier to their motivations to participate in PE. Boy's opinions of girls participating in physical activity 'shaping their beliefs about physical activity' (Vu *et al.*, 2006, p. 21) highlighting the influence of peers but also the gender stereotyping which impacted some girls' conceptualisations of PE and physical activity:

'Both girls and boys talk about physically active girls as being "tomboys" or "too aggressive." Girls are more likely to characterize active girls as "in shape," whereas boys say they are "too athletic."' (Vu *et al.*, 2006, p. 21)

These experiences impacted girls' perceptions of their competency to participate in physical activity establishing further barriers to participation (McGovern *et al.*, 2020). The same experiences impacted girls' experiences of extra-curricular and community sport participation (Section 2.8.2).

The impact of PE space could be exciting or challenging for children, some enjoying the freedoms of a large hall and the potential for free extravagant movement, others fearing injury. Coulter *et al.* (2020) found the PE curriculum favoured active children's preferred participation experiences dominated by team games and competition whilst inactive children sought alternative individual, outdoor and non-competitive experiences. This was exacerbated in the transition from primary to secondary PE experiences with the active children continuing to find personal relevance in the traditional team games dominated curriculum and inactive continued negative experiences.

In summary, there is a growing body of research into lived experiences of PE. This research highlighted that personally significant experiences and meanings were associated with PE, and that these were created by overlapping and potentially contradictory factors impacting those experiences (Coulter *et al.*, 2020).

2.8.2 Phenomenological studies of children's sport experiences

A decade after Whitehead's (1987) work, small pockets of phenomenological and embodied approaches to research in sport also began to provide new insights, tools for reflection and qualitative subjective knowledge about sport experiences (Kerry and Armour, 2000). Studies considered the potential for the application of phenomenological approaches to sport for instance in the understanding of acquisition of skills. Standal and Moe (2011) juxtaposition Merleau-Ponty's embodied learning and Kretchmar's 'sweet tension of the uncertainty of the outcome' (2011, p. 266) to compare these approaches with more traditional cognitive skills acquisition models of Westernised countries.

Recognising Merleau-Ponty's use of the term 'habit' for learning, they conclude that the focus upon contested outcomes in the sporting context differentiates embodied learning from the day-to-day context. What remains interesting to this study of a broader range of children's chosen physical activity is that embodied learning or acquisition of movement habits where contested outcomes are not a central focus remain less clearly understood.

Other studies with adult athletes focused, upon participants' embodied lived experiences of being active (Hockey and Collinson, 2007) and the essence and "sensuosity of the lived sporting body" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 279). Clegg (2012) for instance identified two dimensions in the experiences of parkour practitioners (comprising bodily experience and interactive experience), which led to new perspectives and meanings associated with parkour and freerunning participation. French powerchair football players' embodied experience of playing gave them the opportunity during games to re-connect with an athletic identity (Richard, Perera and Le Roux, 2020).

Phenomenological approaches were used in combination with other research perspectives (Kerry and Armour, 2000). For instance a sociological approach to phenomenology was combined with feminist perspectives to chart "women's lived-body sporting experiences" (Allen-Collinson, 2011a; Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2015). In a rare example of a phenomenologically-inspired study with middle childhood children, Ryba's (2007, 2008) study moved towards a combined phenomenological/participatory approach

to research with 8-10 years old figure skaters, using phenomenological interviews to explore children's enjoyment in competitive figure skating. In doing so the study provided new insights from young skaters into potential sources of enjoyment from competing in their sport. She concludes for instance that : 'bodily existence is related to enjoyment' and 'is a crucial factor in understanding how the athletes enjoy skating' (Ryba, 2007, p. 70). Both the research methodology and the exploration of the embodied experiences of young athletes in this study were highly relevant to the current study's aim to develop new insights into children's experiences of their chosen physical activity.

Phenomenological studies of the experiences of youth sport and physical activity mirrored the findings of other studies (see Section 2.3) and special population studies the experience of general population studies. For instance Foster (2008) investigated the experiences of physical activity for young British Bangladeshi people experiencing obesity and Na (2012) the physical activity (compared to PE) experiences of ten American 12-15 years old students. Fun and enjoyment underpinned experiences of physical activity demonstrating a variety of sources for instance: 'winning goal, helping the team, feeling good about themselves; and refreshment from their daily routine' (Na, 2012, p. 62) having fun and feeling better in themselves (Foster, 2008). Similarly socialising was a positive group experience but could be impacted by comparison with peers and getting an activity wrong (Foster, 2008). Meanwhile Na (2012) identified the experiences of youth sport participants as a bonding experience with family and with community. Meanwhile Foster's findings included experiences specific to her participants whose enjoyment was also rooted in positive physical changes and weight loss; and reduced negative physiological experiences but whose experiences were also impacted by opportunities and barriers to physical activity (which highlighted difficulties of access to physical activities; family norms and cultural expectations and competing demands on time).

Studies have investigated the role of families in nurturing children's embodiment physical activity shaping children's active lifestyles. For instance, Evans and Davies (2010) conclude that families not schools were most influential in encouraging children's

sustained physical activity through life because of the dominant impact of family, class and cultural capital shaping children's embodied perceptions of physical activity. Dagkas and Quarmby support this view drawing on Bourdieu in their study of family and social class factors to conclude that 'pedagogical practices with the family environment are crucial to the development of embodied dispositions toward physical activity and health' (2012, p. 210) in young adolescents in the UK.

Studies of gendered experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity and sport participation highlighted reasons for some girls' lower levels of participation in sport. Self-objectification and concerns about body image were worsened by teasing from peers, particularly by boys (Slater and Tiggemann, 2011). Girls cited a number of reasons for stopping playing sport including loss of interest, lack of time and feelings of lack of competency. However, teasing, appearance and image whilst playing sport contributed to girls feeling:

' like they were crossing traditional gender boundaries when playing sport, particularly for sports traditionally classified as 'masculine'" (Slater and Tiggemann, 2010, p. 619).

Self-identity and body image were strongly associated with studies identifying girls' negative experiences of physical activity. Nonetheless it should be remembered that some boys were also impacted by gendered conceptualisations of physical activity for instance in studies of motivations for participation in PE seen in Section 2.1 (Edwards *et al.*, 2016).

Studies of outdoor activities provided occasional insights into the lived experiences of physical activity. For instance, phenomenological interviews with rural American adolescents who had low fitness and low interest in organised sport or PE explored experiences of participation in outdoor activities. This study supported other phenomenological research to reveal a complexity of inter-related factors describing their experience of participation in outdoor non-competitive physical activity. These included participants' relationship with the outdoors; activity preferences; a range of personal factors such as choice and enjoyment, time outdoors and appreciation of nature and

external factors impacting their participation such as parental and peer influence, and availability of equipment (Christiana, Davis and Freeman, 2014).

Phenomenological studies of children's sport and physical activity experiences are emerging within diverse strands of physical activity literature. Studies of sport focused upon the lived experiences of adolescents participating and competing, their sources of enjoyment which motivated participation. The experiences of participation in physical activity for special populations such as girls and inactive youth highlight barriers to participation. Outdoor studies promote the potential of nature experiences to enhance physical activities. A focus upon children developing an embodied conceptualisation of physical activity is approached by investigations of socioecological factors impacting their physical activity choices, particularly the influence of family. Few studies focus upon uncovering young people's own descriptions of their day to day experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity. However, the following and final study in this section of literature review highlights the potential of such studies.

An existential phenomenological approach to the study of every day bodily movement and well-being revealed two conceptualisations of physical activity in Danish adolescents: 'one of activity and tenseness, and one of break and stillness' (Wehner *et al.*, 2020, p. 1).

Students described bodily experiences of physical activity within these two states:

'ranging from modes of self-forgetfulness to the body demanding attention in different ways; ... as a break from everyday obligations, but also as a way of moving forward; ...as an occasion for being social and for withdrawing from the social worlds' (Wehner *et al.*, 2020, p. 1)

2.8.3 Phenomenological studies of children's dance experiences

The study of dance experiences lent itself to the phenomenological gaze with its intrinsic aesthetic intention embedded in the physicality of the activity. Research tended to focus upon dance in the field of dance education either as a stand-alone subject or as part of PE; the use of community dance initiatives often as part of youth studies or using dance

as an intervention with special population groups. The clearest focus upon dance as an embodied lived experience was most apparent in experiences of intensive training of young ballet dancers. Dance as therapy was also a well-researched area exploring the potential for dance as a creative art form but has not been included here because of its specific purpose to support children in sharing their experiences through dance to support healing (Philpott, 2013).

Dance education research had many of the characteristics of physical education research. Studies tended to focus upon teaching of dance in schools; dance with special populations and inclusive dance which tended to focus upon professional dancers with disability; dance as an embodied route to teaching across curriculum. There was little research voicing the dance experiences of children themselves (Zitomer, 2016).

Notwithstanding, those studies which did set out to foreground young people's experiences of dance identified many of the characteristics of lived experiences of PE and sport. These included competence associated with mastery; connecting with the environment of the dance including social relationships; a sense of self and self-expression often associated with a sense of freedom (Cheyne, 2011), choice and creativity and arousal associated with affective states, heightened awareness of the body (Bond and Stinson, 2000).

Fun and enjoyment often associated with affective states were frequently highlighted. These were associated with 'accounts of superordinary experiences in dance' where the superordinary described multidimensional experiences which were experiences described by children as 'significantly different from the everyday' (Bond and Stinson, 2000, p. 73,56). Disabled elementary school children 6-10 years olds demonstrated enjoyment in participating in dance education classes experiencing peer acceptance and bodily learning (Zitomer, 2016). Enjoyment of dance came from self-determined participation motivations together with periods of flow state where working at mastering the dance task resulted in engagement and enjoyment likened to play (Bond and Stinson, 2007). As well as the value of embodied learning across the curriculum the experience of dance provided

a 'sense of joy of dance' which Finnish pupils described as 'like playing' and giving 'good spirits' (Nielsen and Rowe, 2012, p. 4). Dance studies highlighted in common with play studies, the potential for creative experiences. For instance Nielsen observed that Danish children used 'their imagination and creativity to "see"/make meaning of what is going on' both participating in and watching dance performances (Nielsen and Rowe, 2012, p. 8). Cultural connections were revealed in dance for instance where dance was used as a way of storytelling with a Lebanese girl's experiences of dancing:

'Dabke is our folklore, it's our tradition, so when I dance it, I feel that I am near to my country, I feel that I am a representative of my country. When we are on stage ... it gives me a special feeling, that I am a responsible girl and I have to give a special performance' (Nielsen and Rowe, 2012, p. 9)

Community dance was most often associated with interventions to support particular groups of young people e.g. (Green, 2000; Gunay and Bacon, 2019). The focus for community dance initiatives was less to do with the aesthetic/artistic outcomes of participation than the specific 'needs of each individual group and the quality of the dance experience' (Green, 2000, p. 55). A small but growing body of research in youth studies identified the general popularity of dance with adolescents and benefits of dance to support young people's health and wellbeing (e.g. Harris *et al.*, 2011). These studies refer to the combination of contemporary music e.g. hip-hop to 'become(s) an appealing form of physical activity for adolescents, over and above other forms of exercise' (Harris *et al.*, 2011, p. 75, citing Flores 1995). Simultaneously:

'the social nature of some dance, the need to master the skills of some dance forms suggests that there are benefits beyond 'regular physical activity' (p75) (citing Ritter and Low, 1996 and Sanderson 1996).

Participation in dance could bring 'physical, social and psychological benefits together building resilience in youth' (citing Blum 1998). However, (Harris *et al.*, 2011) also highlighted a lack of evidence-based research linking community dance and broader health outcomes such as resilience. Research demonstrated that dancing was generally

experienced as fun and enjoyable participation for instance participation in street dance and could lead to 'happiness, prosocial attitudes, and self-efficacy' (Lai *et al.*, 2020, p. 1).

Finally studies of the lived experience of young ballet dancers committed to training to achieve high performance levels revealed the importance of mastery experiences associated with hard work and often physical discomfort together with flow states of enjoyment and elevated emotional affective states, also associated with sport performance. However, there was a stronger emphasis than in sport upon the culture of the activity, found in crystallising experiences at a young age which children identified as significant moments when they decided they wanted to dedicate themselves to ballet. Children experienced being and identified themselves as ballet dancers which often supported them through pain and hardship. The pleasure of skill acquisition through practice was contextualised within the culture of the dance form (Pickard and Bailey, 2009; Bailey and Pickard, 2010). Purser (2018) working with professional contemporary dancers describes the performing ballet dancer as experiencing inhabited transcendence in which dancers have an overall awareness of their task – the dance movements – but 'it is a somatically grounded awareness' (2018, p. 49). Performance dance experiences are compared and contrasted with elite/performance sport experiences for instance:

'Young girls were able to explore their own bodies, both physically and artistically in ways that go beyond the forms of experience found in conventional sports' (Wellard, Pickard and Bailey, 2007, p. 89)

These ballet experiences broadened understanding of the potential sources of enjoyment in physical activity which were available to children.

In summary across each of the developing areas of phenomenological studies and studies of the lived experiences of physical activity, growing pockets of research supported the embodied nature of children's physical activity. Children's lived experiences echoed many of the motivational reasons studies identified for participation in PE, school and community sport. However, phenomenological studies also revealed features of embodied physical activity which were less apparent in other studies. These were characterised by:

complexity and the simultaneous layering of social, emotional and aesthetic experiences; often associated with freedom and play; frequently difficult for children to articulate verbally and also characterised by creative responses to movement.

For some this led to a call for a review of public discourses underpinning children's physical activity (Windram-Geddes, 2013; Fitzpatrick and Fitzpatrick, 2018; Coulter *et al.*, 2020). Fitzpatrick and Fitzpatrick (2018) summarised a core concern reflected in the growing body of studies describing current public policy as:

‘positioning physical education, and movement cultures more generally, as tools of control, rather than sites of pleasure, expression or learning’ (2018, p. 124).

There was widespread support for the potential of young peoples' voices to inform and advocate policy and practice which placed young peoples' interests at the centre of the PE learning experience (Coulter *et al.*, 2020). A need for instance to equip young people to challenge healthism discourses of health and fitness which pervaded young peoples' understandings of physical activity (Cale, Harris and Duncombe, 2016). Simultaneously researchers recognised the ability of even young children to reflect on their embodied experiences of PE and to provide insights into the embodied nature of physical activity with older children enjoying and benefitting from the reflective process (Leigh, 2011).

Alongside phenomenological, a small body of literature emerged which recognised the value of interdisciplinary sport studies broadened by consideration of the body. An embodied approach to research was seen as a way of potentially revealing experiences that were ‘simultaneously emotional, physical, social, moral and political.’ (Wellard, 2015, p. 201). Woodward for instance focused upon embodiment as a way of explaining ‘being in the zone’ (2015, p. 21), when individuals reported out of body experiences during activity. Whereas literature had previously focused upon discussion of adult performance athletes, Woodward suggested that the sense of embodiment was accessible to anyone in everyday movement, including young children:

‘who may never articulate the experience but their complete absorption in an activity or the exuberance of physical enjoyment, just running down the garden or along a beach suggests that this is something that is democratic and accessible, rather than the prerogative of elites’ (2015, p. 23)

These developing research perspectives highlighted the potential for this study to combine a phenomenological approach to the study of children’s lived experiences with a participatory theoretical framework. One growing interest in embodiment research has been embodiment as a source of fun and enjoyment. The literature review concludes with a review of studies of sources of fun and enjoyment which underpin children’s experiences of physical activity.

2.9 Sources of fun and enjoyment

Studies of fun and enjoyment associated with PE and organised school and community sport identified fun and enjoyment as the most important factors in ‘determining individuals’ motivation for and continued participation in physical activity settings’ (Walters *et al.*, 2015). Studies of broader physical activity focused upon increased understanding of ‘perceptions of “fun” by children and youth in relation to their leisure time’ (Francis and Kentel, 2008, p. 4). Fun and enjoyment of physical activity was constantly cited as ‘a major factor in the positive experience of both children and adults’ (Wellard, 2013, p. 2); ‘the primary reason’ (Strean, 2009, p. 210); an ‘essential underpinning of meaningful participation’ (Hills, 2009, p. 28); ‘important predictor(s) of physical activity’ (Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011). The loss of fun and enjoyment was a key de-motivator and a reason for activities to be dropped or not taken up (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007b; Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011; Kubayi, Toriola and Monyeki, 2013). Loss of enjoyment could occur in PE lessons as a result of ‘boredom, physical discomfort, repetition, short class periods, and lack of meaningful work’, alongside competitive situations which identified winners and losers (Walters *et al.*, 2015).

Whilst research universally identified the importance of fun and enjoyment, fun and enjoyment remained 'ill defined' (Francis and Kentel, 2008, p. 66), as something which 'manifests itself in different ways' (Walters *et al.*, 2015). Fun and enjoyment was both an 'obvious element' and an 'elusive concept' (Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015, pp. 45–46). Meanwhile Biddle *et al.*, (2015) highlighted three approaches to the study of enjoyment relevant to health-related physical activity in the literature. These comprised the design of physical activity programmes to appeal to intrinsic motivations for participation providing opportunities for enjoyment from self-determined ways of participating; enjoyment from exercise-related affective states; and enjoyment that arose from the achievement of flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), where, particularly elite performers, experienced heightened affective and mental states.

Intrinsic sources of fun and enjoyment in self-determined behaviours

Studies focused upon intrinsic sources of fun and enjoyment (e.g. McCarthy and Jones, 2007b; Bailey *et al.*, 2013) were widely underpinned by self-determination theory (SDT) of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci contended that intrinsic motivation was innate and stated that children were born 'active, inquisitive, curious, and playful' (2000, p. 70) or as Coulter states: 'Children are built to move, they want to move' (2011, p. 653). SDT brought together three psychological needs which underpinned self-determined (intrinsic motivation) behaviours. These comprised competence to participate in an activity or situation, a sense of relatedness to others and a sense of autonomy and choice about their situation. SDT brought together three sub-theories; cognitive evaluation theory, organismic theory and a construct of amotivation. Together these provided a framework for explaining human motivation and behaviour (Pannekoek *et al.*, 2013). This theoretical approach was used widely to explain motivations for participation in sport and physical activity participation and was thereby strongly related to sources of fun and enjoyment.

Programs of PESS and community sport were assessed against the guiding principles of SDT, which proposed that sustained engagement from fun and enjoyment of physical activity was most likely when children experienced 'perceived competence, social

involvement and friendships, psychological support and also mastery-orientated learning environments' (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007b, p. 400). Children and young people reported autonomy associated with unstructured and unsupervised activity as powerful sources of enjoyment. Fun and enjoyment from a sense of autonomy and choice was linked to variety and novelty: 'I like physical activity classes because I have fun and play different games that I can't do in other classes' (Agbuga, Xiang and McBride, 2012, p. 98; Walters *et al.*, 2015). Creativity and inventiveness was linked to this sense of freedom to guide children's participation and enjoyment (Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011). 'Play' and 'playing' featured strongly in these accounts linking autonomous, unstructured and creative activity with enjoyment. This echoed the importance that Côté (Côté and Vierimaa, 2014) assigned to deliberate play in supporting long term sport participation as part of their Development Model of Sport Participation (DMSP). A number of studies focused upon enjoyment from freedom of adult supervision or control (Eyler *et al.*, 2006; Francis and Kentel, 2008; Engelen *et al.*, 2013), highlighting the potential for too much structure to 'result in losing the primary benefits of children's physical activity play; enjoyment, fun, spontaneity, freedom and flow experiences' (Sääkslahti, 2014, p. 35).

Meanwhile fun and enjoyment was universally found in playing with friends and socialising (Walters *et al.*, 2015), where physical activity and sport became the vehicle for the social grouping. Enjoyment linked to self-relatedness and also the support of significant others went beyond peer friendships. Students highlighted the appeal of being active with teachers, family members and others, perhaps highlighting the novelty value of being active with significant adults (Strean, 2009; Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011). Parents and positive coaches were key to children's enjoyment of sport and coaches played a pivotal role in the development of children's attitudes to sport, their sense of competence and self-efficacy (Weiss, 2000; Strean, 2009; Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011).

Sources of fun and enjoyment were multi-stranded and interconnecting. For instance, perceived competence and a sense of mastery (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007b) could be underpinned by a sense of autonomy and agency in the decision to participate,

(Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011). Fun was found both in the activity itself but also in having a friend with whom to share the activity (Agbuga, Xiang and McBride, 2012).

Perceived competence, the challenge of mastering an activity or skill and competition were all sources of fun and enjoyment which were closely linked. Activities which challenged students were found to be fun and enjoyable as long as challenges were not perpetually too hard (Mandigo and Holt, 2006), when activities could then be found boring. Similarly the impact of competition on enjoyment was complex (Walters *et al.*, 2015). Some children found competition a source of fun and enjoyment. For instance, they found competition helped them increase their skill levels and competence, which led to a sense of achievement (Light and Curry, 2007). Others found competition a barrier to participation and wanted to play just for fun (Mandic *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, raised affective states could compensate for failure and incompetence (Francis and Kentel, 2008) in an activity.

Affective state fun and enjoyment, embodiment and flow

Affective state fun and enjoyment was closely associated in research with embodied and flow state experiences of physical activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Moderate intensity activity could lead to immediate pleasurable responses, emotions and mood changes; i.e. the feeling of fun from being active (Francis and Kentel, 2008; Coulter and Woods, 2011; Tomik, Olex-Zarychta and Mynarski, 2012; Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015). Athletes reported elevated emotions and senses of elation during and after sport (Allen-Collinson, 2009). These experiences encouraged further participation in physical activity. Young people talked positively about the enjoyment of the feeling of being active and even physically challenged (Coulter and Woods, 2011; Wellard, 2012). Simultaneously, children at health risk reported 'feeling good' about their physical activity programme and liked to be in the physical activity class because it helped the respondent to exercise and 'give energy' to her body (Walters *et al.*, 2015). This is echoed throughout young people-centred studies where taking part in a game was considered 'good fun' and explanations about why activity was liked explained as "'cause I like running'" (Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011). Others needed the context of the game to bring enjoyment (Stearns, 2009). Future

Foundation (2015) found that 64% of the 1000 children surveyed reported 'feel(ing) better about themselves' after exercise. Some children saw outdoor activities as less stuffy than being indoors and a source of fun: 'I would do more outside activities because we sit inside a lot of time. Outside is good for physical activities because it is more fun!' (Walters *et al.*, 2015).

These studies demonstrated shared and generalised experiences of raised affective state often characterised by multiple, inter-related sources of fun and enjoyment. For instance, a child's inner emotional response to the experience of the physicality and bodily movement sensations of a game/activity, may have been enhanced by the presence of their friends and/or mastery of a particular skill. Wellard (2012) addressed this bringing together of body and mind by taking an embodied approach to physical activity. He focused upon the importance of children learning what was pleasurable in their bodily experience of a range of activities, appealing to 'a circuit of body-reflexive pleasures' (2012, p. 26). These comprised physiological and psychological experiences and feelings that came together within the social context of the activity to make the physical activity pleasurable in a 'felt', embodied way. For instance, immediate feedback from others positively reinforced the experience, encouraged the child to not only enjoy the immediate movement sensation but to also embed the movement experience in their memory. This provided a credible explanation for why there may be a link between active children becoming active adults. Children's memories of pleasurable experiences could be used reflexively to build expectations of pleasure from activities into adulthood (Wellard, 2012). Encouraging children to reflect upon the physicality of activities and movement sensations, their emotional and aesthetic sources of enjoyment from movement and activity, may enable them to build positive memories for the future.

Embodiment and raised affective state as features of physical activity, particularly associated with mastery of skills and movement challenges, have been characterised by flow experiences involving a sense of fusion of body and mind in action (Leder, 1990). Flow experiences have been described as elevated affective states when the challenges

of movement were matched by movement competence (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975) and gave rise to different degrees of flow events (Romero and Calvillo-Gómez, 2014, p. 514). Biddle et al. (2015) meanwhile described the state of flow in physical activity in terms of positive sensations and uplifting elevated perceptions of body and mind in physical performance. Some have set out to 'to propose a view of flow based on phenomenology and embodied interaction' (Romero and Calvillo-Gómez, 2014, p. 514). Flow might be considered as four individual psychological states (Wright, Sadlo and Stew, 2007) or as defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1975), a continuum of states. The continuum of states start with the dominant challenge-skill states, where the participant is acting at the limits of their skill level, but then goes on to help to incorporate states of enjoyment from positive distraction, characterised by the participant being absorbed by the activity, worry free, and reflecting a state of playfulness and exploratory experience undertaken for its own sake (Cowley et al., 2008). This state links strongly with highly imaginative, creative active play observed in child-led recreational activity. A further manifestation of flow is a state of mindfulness leading to an emphasised alertness of the world whilst in a state of relaxation. Finally a range of other states are characterised by immersion and engagement in an activity; the absorption of the individual into a time and space which leads to a fading of the outside world (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Sources of enjoyment linked to raised affective states were first studied in high performance settings. Taking an embodied and multi-sensory approach to the experience of physical activity more generally, affective state and flow state sources of enjoyment have potential to be equally relevant as frameworks for understanding other strands of children's physical activity. These frameworks may be useful for investigating sources of fun and enjoyment in children's lived experiences of physical activity.

In summary, fun and enjoyment were important concepts within research of children's physical activity behaviours, but complex to understand or locate. For instance Whitehead (1990) suggested the failure of physical educationalists to identify the source of enjoyment in PE and movement made it problematic to identify enjoyment per se as a motivator for

PE. Furthermore Wellard (2012) and Whitehead (1990) in making a case for broadening the potential for children to experience bodily pleasure from physical activity, suggested the need to break away from 'simplistic readings of pleasure' (Wellard, 2012, p. 32). From this perspective fun and enjoyment were a socially constructed, highly individual and changing phenomenon. Consequently, children viewed enjoyment in physical activity from their own developing viewpoint.

2.10 The gap in research and developing research question

This literature review found that there was relatively little physical activity research with middle childhood children. This was important because a) this is a formative period in children's lives for establishing their physical activity habits, and b) emerging evidence indicates that declines in physical activity start as young as 7 years old (Adamson *et al.*, 2017). Much of this research was driven by an explicit interest in assessing and promoting the contribution of PE school and community sport to support UK Government health and wellbeing policy agendas. Fewer studies focused upon children's physical activities in their free-choice home/family times and spaces. As a result, the literature is dominated by studies which measured children and young people's levels of physical activity and assessed their motivations for participation in PESS and activity programmes. In this context children were mostly treated as subjects of research, in contrast to more participatory approaches which were gaining greater support in other fields.

Fun and enjoyment emerged from the literature as a key underpinning factor for children and young people's participation in physical activity. However, these studies were less successful in identifying sources of fun and enjoyment and little research focused upon giving voice to children's lived experience of physical activity to inform this identification. 'The construct of enjoyment has been poorly understood ... and remains in need of further study' (Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015, p. 47) in order better to understand how to provide environments in which children choose to be active.

Alongside this dominant profile of research activities, small but growing pockets of research had started to address the lived experience of physical activity [in the teaching and experiencing of PE and sport participation](#), albeit primarily in adult performance athletes. Phenomenological research frameworks had adopted embodied approaches to physical activity using participatory methods and reporting in athletes' [and pupils'](#) own words. A few studies had started to support a phenomenological approach to the investigation of children's physical activity and an embodied approach to physical activity (e.g. Ryba, 2007, 2008; Tannehill *et al.*, 2013), not the least to assist in the challenge of investigating sources of fun and enjoyment. These developments also linked to a growing interest in examining PE as an embodied subject of study and physical activity experience.

The literature review demonstrated the potential to build on early examples of phenomenologically framed research to investigate the lived experiences of children's chosen physical activity. Applying an embodied approach to understanding children's free-choice physical activity might provide new insights into children's lived experiences and sources of fun and enjoyment. Focusing upon children's free-choice activities also recognised children's roles as active agents in their development of physically active lifestyles as part of their overall socialisation into adulthood (Sääkslahti, 2014). The literature review informed the shaping of the study's research questions as follows:

The developing research questions

Research Aim:

To investigate the lived experiences of chosen physical activity in middle childhood, and to explore whether working towards a new child-guided participatory research approach might assist in revealing new insights.

Overall research question:

How do middle childhood experience physical activity?

Research questions which will contribute to answering this:

- RQ 1 What do they choose to do in their own free choice time?
- RQ 2 What do they say/express about physical activity experiences, particularly in relation to sources of enjoyment?

- RQ 3 What do they say/suggest influences their choices?

3 Developing a theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

The Literature Review (Chapter 2) demonstrated that there was a lack of research which engaged children in participatory studies of their [free-choice](#) lived embodied physical activity experiences. This led me to explore research approaches which would provide an opportunity for children's views to be foregrounded. In this chapter I present the ontological and epistemological beliefs which underpinned the study. I positioned the study within a social constructivist perspective (Patton, 2002; Robson, 2011), in which children were positioned as active agents (Prout and James, 2005) in constructing their own beliefs and understanding about the world and phenomena (as discussed in Section 3.2). I then explain how I built upon the experience of conducting two pilot studies (Section 3.3) using ethnomethodological methodologies to decide upon an existential phenomenological framing (Heidegger, translated by Stambaugh, 2010) of the main study (Section 3.4). The existential phenomenological framing of the study was developed using Merleau-Ponty's (1962, translated by Smith) emphasis upon the embodiment of lived experience (Section 3.4). The chapter then turns to children's participatory research (Section 3.5). I critically review research methods and models of participatory research with children, shaped by what Prout and James (1997) described as the 'new' sociology of childhood paradigm. This led me to bring together existential phenomenological and participatory research approaches. By bringing these together I was working towards a model of 'agentic child-guided' (AChiG) research. I discuss key aspects of the model such as the importance of reflexivity and the maintenance of a collaborative adult researcher/child coresearcher relationship. The chapter concludes by showing the proposed framing of this study of a small group of 7 to 11 years old children in an agentic child-guided existential phenomenological / autophenomenographical inquiry.

3.2 The epistemological and ontological framing of the research

Researchers' basic belief systems and world views guide their framing of research, the methodologies and methods they use (Cresswell, 2007). Social constructivism underpinned my overall research approach. Meaning was, 'concerned with how individuals constructed and made sense of their world' and "emphasize(d) the world of experience as it is lived, felt and undergone by people acting in the social situations' (Robson, 2011, p. 24). From this perspective the meaning children attributed to physical activity, their understanding, beliefs and perceptions of physical activity, were constructed through their experience of physical activities and the social interactions, the people and objects they encountered.

Constructivism in this work refers to the construction of knowledge, meaning and truths by individuals (see for instance Crotty, 1998; Robson, 2011 amongst others). Meaning was constructed and situated within the context of each individual's historical and social norms (Cresswell, 2007). Constructivism describes a family of theoretical approaches with multiple underpinning theories; the 'assimilation of both behaviourist and cognitive ideals' (Amineh and Asl, 2015, p. 9). For instance, constructivist approaches in educational theory include the Piagetian view of childhood as a universal experience, and child development as a series of cognitive stages through which the child increases their ability to construct knowledge and understanding of the world. However, this study adopts Vygotskian social constructivist approach to children's development in which 'development is seen as something that happens *between* a child and others in specific social and cultural settings' (Montgomery and Woodhead, 2003, p. 113). Learning is a social activity (Hein, 1991); a social process of interaction and collaboration (Amineh and Asl, 2015). Adams (2006) suggested that the social constructivist approach to education has been seen to be liberating, enabling a focus upon the learner and learning rather than teaching. The learner engages in understanding the world through a variety of possibilities rather than a prescribed rightness of a particular view.

The focus is upon the learning process and establishing a collaborative learning environment rather than the demonstration of the outcomes of learning through test results or performance. Learners co-construct knowledge guided (not instructed) by teachers through tasks which have implicit worth. The pupil is positioned as an active participant in the learning process. Consequently, pupils have greater control over their learning within the collaborative learning process with their teachers. Learning is no longer judged by teacher-administered tests (Adams, 2006). Each of these aspects of a social constructivist approach to learning resonates positively for the study of children's physical activity. Finally Amineh and Asl's positioning of knowledge from a social constructivist view 'as a human product that is socially and culturally constructed' 'together with the role of individuals who 'create meaning when they interact with each other and with the environment they live in' (2015, p. 13) supports the embodied approach the study takes to physical activity.

In framing the research as a social constructivist study I recognised that each individual child's views of the world was shaped by the unique socioecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) environment each inhabited. Children were seen to be agentic and whilst all were impacted by spatial and temporal factors and the social structures within which they lived (Hammersley, 2014), each child was impacted and responded differently.

Consequentially, my focus was upon my research participants' individual responses to their environments; each participant's chosen experiences of physical activity within their home, school and extra-curricular activities. A consequence of this epistemological stance was that I recognised that my research participants were likely to understand the phenomenon of physical activity differently from one another. Simultaneously they were each likely to hold multiple 'realities' of physical activity which altered with differing circumstances and time in diverse ways.

Social constructivists seek to understand the complexity of multiple realities, and how those realities are socially constructed (Cresswell, 2007). The central aim of constructivism is to grow understanding and 'emphasize(s) the world of experience as it is

lived, felt and undergone by people acting in social situations'. Simultaneously the role of research participants is to help 'construct reality with the researchers' (Robson, 2011, p. 24). Whilst the research questions which emerged from the Literature Review (Section 2.9): 'How do middle childhood children experience physical activity?' could be answered using different epistemological viewpoints, the social constructivist perspective complemented my own epistemological position and highlighted the gap in the existing research. Having framed the study within a social constructivist paradigm, I next considered the developing logic of my enquiry (Stainton-Rogers, 2006). I needed a research methodology, rooted in social constructivism, which would address the aim of the research to gain insight into children's lived experience of physical activity. I undertook two pilot studies to inform and assist in developing the main study research methodology.

3.3 Pilot studies which helped to frame the main study

The purpose of the pilot studies was to inform the main study in two ways. Firstly, I wanted to explore the use of participatory research methodologies and research methods with middle childhood children. Secondly, I wanted to explore the potential range of children's physical activity experiences in times/spaces in which they could exercise some choice. In the first pilot study I investigated how children experienced physical activity with 5 to 11 years old children in their holiday multi-sport program. In the second pilot study I researched how children experienced their school play times with a class of 7-8 years old children. Both studies informed the theoretical framing, methodology and design of the main study research with children in their home/family-based time/spaces. Each pilot also sensitised me to children's physical activity choices and their potential range and variety of lived experiences.

I undertook an ethnomethodological study with children focused upon their naturally occurring everyday behaviours. I aimed to reveal new insights into the way children constructed their understanding of their social world and make sense of physical activity as a socially constructed phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005;

Punch, 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Intense attention was placed upon children's naturally occurring behaviours in each physical activity setting.

Pilot study 1: 5 to 11 years old children's experiences of physical activity in their holiday play scheme

An application to the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC/2015/2008/Plowright/) received a favourable opinion prior to the start of the study. Key ethical considerations as part of that application are summarised in Appendix I.a. In relation to the reporting of study findings in the public domain as part of this study, ethical considerations included strict measures for use of participants' data. Participants were deemed to retain ownership of research data they participated in generating. Assurance was given that only data for which written informed consent had been granted by both parents/carers and participants themselves would be used. Age appropriate information and consent forms were used to secure informed consent (see Appendices Ib and Ic). Permission for the use of appropriately anonymised participant data was gained for the writing up of the study for examination purposes and for the dissemination of the results of the study initially on the host holiday playscheme company website and thereafter as part of academic presentations of the study. A commitment was made that photographs of children would be anonymised for the purpose of reporting and dissemination of research findings outside of the children's normal association with the holiday playscheme. Where images included participants and/or other children individual these would be suitably redacted to avoid participants being recognised. A commitment was also given for all personal and research data comprising recordings and images collected by or featuring participants to be destroyed on completion of the researcher's Doctoral studies for which the research provided a pilot study. Any further use of those materials would be subject to a further application to the participants for continued use.

The holiday play scheme offered a wide range of indoor and outdoor sports and novel play activities, together with arts and crafts and ways of relaxing including screen-based activities. Sixteen 7-11 years old girls and boys worked with me as research participants.

Over the four days of their daily holiday play scheme, research participants took photographs and videos about what they liked to do using research iPads. I observed their activities, sometimes participating with them sometimes, with their permission, videoing or photographing their activities. On the last afternoon of the programme children drew pictures for the organisers about what they enjoyed about their week. Research participants recorded informal unstructured drawing/photo/video-elicited discussions with me about what they chose to do, how and why they do them. Appendix I provides background information to the pilot study.

Children were skilled in, and enthusiastic about using the research iPads to take photos and short videos about their play scheme. Those images together with their drawings became valuable sources to develop rich discussions about participants' physical activity choices. I conducted a grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 2008) style of analysis on the gathered data. Key findings from the analysis sensitised me to the following features of children's physical activity experiences:

- Socialising with children, as well as adult play scheme leaders, was an important part of research participants' physical activities. New friendships were forged through active play. Activities were encouraged by the novelty of having new friends to engage in activities. Adult play scheme leaders became novel props to be manipulated to help participants to be active in new ways, for instance being assisted to organise team games or to be physically carried and bumped on the bouncy castle
- Children exploited the novel activity environment and novel equipment to try activities and use space that would not have been available to them at home. They did this in embodied ways, for instance combining the physicality of moving through novel giant building blocks whilst enacting a gangster story against new friends. Raised affective states were shown in laughter and excited free-flowing body movements

- These two key features led to widespread, highly creative co-created active play and playing at traditional sports in recreational ways with rules children adjusted to allow games to flow
- Approximately half the research participants chose inactive pursuits and activity levels were generally at low vigour levels. Those playing at traditional sports did so with moderate to high levels, whilst active play was generally at low levels of vigour, characterised by suddenly high energy bursts of excited activity.

The first study therefore began to reveal the nature and key drivers of physical activities chosen by each research participant. Glimpses were gained of the social and creative experiences associated with children's chosen pursuits. These glimpses fell short of providing rich insights which might reveal the depth or complexity of experiences associated with physical activity. I needed to find a methodology, still rooted in social constructivism, which might better reveal children's lived experiences of physical activity.

Pilot study 2: 7 to 8 years old children's experiences of school play time activities

An application to the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HRED) (HREC/2015/2190/Plowright/) received a favourable opinion prior to the start of the study. Ethical considerations for the second study followed the same rigour as that for the first pilot study as summarised in Appendix I.a. The context for the second pilot study was different to the first investigating children's experiences of their chosen activities during school play times. Particular ethical issues which arose in relation to the second pilot study are contained in Appendix II.a 'Pilot Study 2: Background Information - Key points of application to Open University HREC'. As for the first pilot study, reporting of study findings in the public domain as part of this study, included strict measures for use of participants' data. Assurance was given that only data for which written informed consent had been granted by both parents/carers and participants would be used. Age-appropriate information and consent forms were used to secure informed consent from both children and parents/carers (see Appendices II.b and II.c). Permission for the use of appropriately anonymised participant data was gained for the writing up of the study for examination

purposes. As in the first pilot study, participants were deemed to retain ownership of research data they assisted in generating. A report was also prepared for the Head Teacher setting out the participants' choices of playtime activities and their reflections upon them. The participants in the study also directed the preparation of a PowerPoint presentation to present to their class teacher. I compiled the presentation using participants' chosen photographs and video sequences. Only images which participants gave express permission to be used were included in the data collection and a second check was made with participants before their images, or images they appeared in, were used. Where images included participants and/or other children these would be suitably redacted to avoid participants being recognised. A commitment was given for all personal and research data comprising recordings and images collected by or featuring participants to be destroyed on completion of the researcher's Doctoral studies for which the research provided a pilot study. Any further use of those materials would be subject to a further application to the participants for continued use.

Building upon the first pilot study I explored a phenomenological approach to data analysis, using thematic analysis to develop rich descriptions of children's chosen play time physical activity. Learning from the first pilot study, my focus was upon participants' overall play time experiences. This recognised that many of the participants' play time choices were not physically active. Physical activity competed with time spent socialising and engaging in sedentary and inactive pursuits. My research questions explored their experiences of physical activity in play times; their enjoyment and sources of enjoyment from physical activity.

Seventeen members of a class of 7 to 8 years old children were engaged as participants taking photographs and video sequences on research iPads over a week of before school, mid-morning and lunchtime play times. Seven participants then engaged in small focus group or individual discussions with me describing their play time activities using their photographs and videos as conversation prompts. I took a phenomenological approach to discussions (Ryba, 2008), in which I sought to encourage a collaborative process for

developing rich descriptions of the participants play time experiences. Thematic analysis was used to develop rich descriptions using participants' own words and expression of their experiences. The following key findings built upon the first pilot study:

- Three key themes were generated with participants in descriptions of their play time comprising 'playtime as freedom'; 'the role of creativity and imagination in getting active' and 'the role of the outdoors and space for activity'.
- Participants were mostly active at only moderate or low levels of locomotion (with boys slightly more active than girls)
- Participants described a wide range of activities including socialising (hanging out with friends); time to be silly; being outdoors, a range of made-up games and skills practices (e.g. gymnastics, skipping or use of the climbing equipment)
- Participants described their activities in embodied ways, talking about what they felt like physically (e.g. hanging upside down with hair loose), cognitively (e.g. as 'tense' in competition) and emotionally (e.g. as 'time to be silly')
- Expressions of fun and enjoyment were characterised by 'friend time', the excitement of competition (primarily the boys), physicality for instance in rough and tumble play, and testing themselves in physical skills challenges (hand over hand monkey bar challenge)

The second pilot also revealed the enthusiasm participants had for assisting in the analysis of their data and in disseminating their findings in a report for their class teacher. Responding to participants' requests we worked together to group a representative selection of pictures with captions which described the class's play time activities. The class critiqued a draft presentation that I prepared and then adjusted for them, before they showed it to their class teacher. This highlighted the value and potential for participants to be involved in the analysis of their data, guiding the researcher to data that was most important to them.

The two pilot studies therefore confirmed the value of positioning the study in social constructivism. More importantly the second pilot study highlighted the further potential for

a phenomenological approach to reveal the essence of children's physical activity as embodied experiences. Consequently, a phenomenological approach was explored for its affordances as a research methodology.

3.4 Application of an existential phenomenological approach

Phenomenology is a complex, multi-stranded, nuanced and developing gathering of theoretical frameworks (Allen-Collinson, 2009). It is concerned with revealing the 'essence' of phenomena (Heidegger, 1953; Patton, 2002). Heidegger's existentialist approach to phenomenology promoted a greater focus upon the workings of individuals 'experiences' of the world and phenomena (Heidegger, 1953). Applying an existential phenomenological research lens to the main study of children's experiences of their chosen physical activities, enabled me to investigate individual research participants' socioecologically contextualised understandings and experiences of physical activity in their free-choice time.

The inclusion of the philosophical underpinnings of studies needed to be made clear in order that 'the goal of insight which is central to the phenomenological task can be achieved' (Kerry and Armour, 2000, p. 14). I will therefore be explicit and set out my philosophical existential phenomenological approach here to provide the clarity of approach that I developed and used. First, I briefly explain how I focused attention upon the interaction of the lived body with the world based on my reading of previous work.

Heidegger's existential phenomenology focused on two key tenets comprising 'existence', and 'Dasein' (meaning being there) which he explained as 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1953). This emphasizes human beings' embodied existences, and from this followed human beings' corporeal being as a point of engagement with the world and central to human perception of the world (Whitehead, 1987; Allen-Collinson, 2009).

Epistemologically knowledge and understanding are developed from our embodied experiences. Phenomena are experienced through and within our bodies and are part of our deep human consciousness and experience. 'The body ... is not just an object in the

world but the very medium whereby our world comes into being' (Leder, 1990, p. 5). In other words humans develop knowledge from 'existential modes of being human at the most fundamental level' (Briod et al., 2011, p. 221).

Heidegger provided phenomenology with his fundamental ontology of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1953; Briod et al., 2011). Ontologically Heidegger contends that there is 'intentionality' in all human actions; human beings connect and direct their actions in space and time, towards something or someone. Experiences come from consciousness of the world and being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1953; Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2015, p. 4). Subsequently, Merleau-Ponty developed the concept of being-in-the-world into 'flesh-of-the-world', conceptualising human consciousness of the world as an intertwining of an objective world, our corporeal being and consciousness. This bringing together of body and mind gave rise to the concept of embodied pursuits (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, translated by Landes, 2013).

Heidegger's existential phenomenological approach together with Merleau-Ponty's emphasis upon embodied pursuits, focused upon the interaction of the lived body with the world (Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2014). Adopting this existential phenomenological lens for the study of children's experiences of physical activity appeared to offer the possibility of accessing new insights by turning attention to bodily as well as oral expressions of physical activity experiences. The focus of the study was upon children's chosen physical activity for the purpose of being simultaneously corporeally, socially, emotionally and cognitively in the world. A phenomenological approach to the research of the lived experience of physical activity finds common ground in the body as the focus of inquiry (Whitehead, 1990; Connolly, 1995). Such an approach was conceived to reveal the experience of physical activity beyond the physical. By observing children's corporeal experiences there was potential to capture, discuss and describe the social, emotional and cognitive aspects of experiences that helped children give meaning to the phenomena of their chosen physical activity (Stolz, 2013). The existential phenomenological lens also enabled me to consider the 'socially situated nature of human

embodiment and experience' (Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2015, p. 4). Children's embodied, lived experiences were potentially impacted upon by a range of socioecological factors. Those socioecological factors situated children culturally, in space and time, but also as children in society subject to the impact of public policy discourses shaping their physical activity choices and experiences.

The Literature Review (Chapter 2) showed that public discourses tended to dominate research into children's physical activity guiding research methodologies according to adult pre-conceptions of children's lives and experiences. Taking an embodied existential phenomenological perspective did not in itself guarantee children's own voices would be better heard and their lived experiences more reliably conceptualised. It remained important that the study generated each individual child's viewpoint of the essence of physical activity. This required a child-centred research framework which was participatory throughout the research, linked to the theoretical framing of the study, to the research methodology and research methods. In this way there was the potential to provide the experiencing individual a central role in the research process, guiding the research to make the child's voice central to the inquiry.

3.5 Application of a new participatory research approach

Participatory research is a contested concept in qualitative inquiry often ill-defined (Huf and Dennis, 2016), reflecting the context, perceived purposes and value attached to specific research projects (Bucknall, 2009). Studies varied greatly and could be poorly described, making replication and validation of the participatory nature of studies difficult (Jacquez, Vaughn and Wagner, 2013). This emphasised the importance of setting out participatory research models and methods as transparently as possible.

In a rare phenomenological sport study with children, for instance, Ryba welcomed growing support for children's capability to be active agents in their own lives, but was critical of the design of sport studies which 'appear to be in an epistemological antinomy between knowledge we want to obtain and knowledge we actually attain' (2008, p. 334). A

research framework was needed which was capable of bridging that divide, adopting epistemological and methodological underpinnings that were complementary, and able to generate knowledge that addressed research questions which were essentially phenomenological in nature. The creation of a robust research model to achieve this aim was at the heart of the study.

3.5.1 The framing of participatory research with children

Participatory research with children was primarily rooted in the paradigm framed by Prout and James (2005) as the new sociology of childhood paradigm encouraged by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) (1989). The UNCRC, (1989) recognised children's capability and right to be informed, involved and consulted about decisions that affected their lives. The new sociology of childhood paradigm (Tisdall, 2012) challenged the framing of children, in much of the research which had gone before, as immature or incomplete beings (Corsaro, 1997; Mayall, 2003) to be cared for or nurtured. The new sociology of childhood embraced empowerment of children, no longer defining childhood as a state of deficiency, and children as not yet fully capable or still in the process of becoming adult. Instead, children were recognised as complete capable social beings (Qvortrup, 1994), with valid skills, qualities and insights into their own lived experiences, as children. Childhood was framed as a social construct, in which children were social actors and active agents in shaping their own worlds and phenomena (James & Prout, 1997; Mayall, 2003). Furthermore children's influence was seen to extend beyond their own immediate lives, such that they were active agents in shaping the lives of others and the communities in which they lived (Prout and James, 2005). These commitments to the empowerment of children led to a dramatic growth in participatory research (Tisdall and Punch, 2012); and developed further with the evolution of child-led research in the early 21st century (Kellett, 2005, 2011), which for some became an aspirational goal for children's participatory research. A range of models and typologies of models of participatory research developed, some of which were identified in pockets of research with young people in the Literature Review in Section 2.6.

3.5.2 Models of participatory research

Children's empowerment was central to most typologies for participatory models of children and young people's research: variously defined by child participants' impact upon decision making (Lansdown, 2001; Hart, 2008); child participants' role and/or the role of the adult researcher in the research (Shier, 2001); and the degree to which child participants were involved in the whole research process, from formulation of the research questions to the dissemination of research results (Jacquez et al., 2013; Kellett, 2011). Objectives of research impacted the potential and possibilities for participatory research (Marr and Malone, 2007). It was important in all approaches to make the purpose of participatory research transparent at the outset.

Mason and Urquhart's (2001) framework of models of participatory research provides a comprehensive ontological, epistemological and methodological framework, which recognises the complexity of children's roles as researchers (Marr and Malone, 2007), particularly their role in decision making. The framework sets out three models of children's research (comprising 'Adult', 'Children's Rights' and 'Child Movement' models) characterised by:

- The way children were enrolled upon studies (Initiation participation strategy)
- The ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research study (ideological framework and location of study knowledge)
- The way children were viewed (from passive and incompetent, incomplete 'becomings' to competent social actors)
- Different degrees of power sharing between the adult researcher and child participant (the locus of power)
- How support required by children to participate is assessed (Needs identification)
- Role of the adult researcher (Professionals)
- How children's voices are heard (Children's voices)

This comprehensive summary of key elements shaping the theoretical and ideological grounding, positioning and empowerment of children in each of the research models

makes the claim of the participatory nature of each model transparent. Notwithstanding the growth of different models of research, which assisted the shaping of participatory research, underlying epistemological and methodological assumptions of children's participatory research have been challenged (Tisdall and Punch, 2012; Kim, 2016).

3.5.3 Critiques of the new sociology of childhood research paradigm

Critiques gathered around three key assumptions which were clearly visible in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) (1989). Firstly, assumptions were made that through participatory research children's voices would be heard. Secondly, children were seen to have agency over their own thoughts and understandings and to be capable of contributing strongly to research processes. Thirdly, a high value was placed upon children's unique insider view of children's worlds. Children were assumed to be better informed and more insightful about matters which affect children generally.

The giving of a voice to children was synonymous in much research with the empowerment of children, some pursuing an agenda of emancipation of childhood (James, 2007). Child-led research, for instance, empowered children through training and support to lead inquiry into matters children choose (Kellett, 2005). However, others saw the emphasis upon children's right to a voice as a minority world view, perpetuated by the UNCRC (1989), which needed to take account of the greater complexities of the lives of children globally. More commonly than in the minority world for instance, majority world children contribute to family chores and observe values, such as their responsibility to family and respect and recognition for the entitlement of adults (Ansell, 2016; Kim, 2016). The concept of children's rights of voice could be incompatible with these observances. Some researchers, however, continued to champion children's positions, and made the general point that children's contribution to their society should be recognised reciprocally and children's views valued (Tisdall and Punch, 2012). The principle of reciprocal recognition of the rights of both children and adults was compatible with the less accentuated UNCRC (1989) requirement that children should not only have the right to a voice but also respect the rights of others. Hart goes further to suggest that research

which recognised the rights of others to have a voice as well as children was ‘morally superior to children being ‘in-charge’ (2008, p. 24).

Co-constructing data with children, rather than simply collecting verbatim information at face value, was important in capturing the complexity of what children said. This involved reflexive thinking about what was said and the social context in which it was said; positioning adult researchers still in a strongly influential role whilst giving children voice (Bucknall, 2005). Simultaneously some questioned whether adults could surrender power to collaborative working relationships, and concluded that there is much rhetoric around inclusive participatory research which was actually driven by adult agendas (Lomax, 2012). The power to grant children a voice in research generally rested with adults. Adult researchers tended to initiate research programmes and settings which impacted adult-child research relationships and children’s empowerment. For instance, research in schools was overshadowed by the child’s association of being a pupil in school. Simultaneously collaborative relationships and approaches to research rarely involved children in anything but data collection, and there was a paucity of research which engaged children in the whole research process (Bucknall, 2005; Mary Kellett, 2005). Reporting of results, the choice of quotes and framing of what children say was largely undertaken by adult researchers (Bucknall, 2009; Kim, 2016).

Child-led research judged the participatory nature of research by the degree of engagement of children in all stages, from the formulation of research questions, the design of the data collection and analysis methods, through to the dissemination of results (Mary Kellett, 2005; Thomas, 2007). This however highlighted further challenges. For instance, children are generally not empowered, socially positioned or experienced in research to initiate their own inquiries and formulate their own research questions. Research was therefore generally initiated and framed by adult researchers who formulated research questions or at least subject for inquiry. An assumption was made that training children to be skilled researchers, ensuring children’s capability to lead

research, would result in children having agency. However, this also raised implementation and epistemological concerns.

Epistemological concerns were raised about over-privileging children's knowledge. The concept of an agentic child led to the assumption that children were able to offer a privileged view of children's lives which was beyond the reach of adults (Bergström, Jonsson, & Shanahan, 2010; Kellett, 2005), and offer unique findings that were of value to policy makers (Smith, Monaghan, & Broad, 2002). There was potential to over valorise an all-seeing, all-knowing, rational and articulate child with unique insight into his/her own life and that of their peers (Lomax, 2012; Tisdall, 2012; Hammersley, 2014). This failed to recognise the way knowledge was constructed through each individual's unique social interactions (Lomax, 2012). Children could also become viewed as an homogenised group, in which assumptions were made that small groups of children, typical of child-led and participatory research, could represent all children (Bucknall, 2005). A more pragmatic stance recognised that children could bring the benefit of their own unique viewpoint to research. Whilst not representing all children's views, child participants in research could share a standpoint (Thomson and Gunter, 2007). Whilst research did not find child researchers better able to collect data from other children, child researchers could make children's standpoints visible in ways that adult-centric discourses might not be able, (Lomax, 2012).

One characteristic of participatory research is that it provides children with a choice of creative research methods which employ day-to-day activities, such as drawing and story-telling (Clark, 2004). In this way creative non-verbal forms of expression can be valued, reducing the tendency for more competent verbal communicators to be privileged in research (Kim, 2016).

The use of creative methods in this way has been criticised. For example: that adding 'non-verbal' approaches might undermine the richness and diversity of children's spoken contributions (Lomax, 2012); that not all children will feel able to use non-verbal approaches such as expressing their thoughts in drawings or gathering of photos (Hearn

and Thomson, 2014a); or concerns that children can be homogenised as a group who can be reached through ‘childish’, child-friendly research methods (Hunleth, 2011). These critiques appear to demonstrate a lack of awareness of the nature of child-led research, in which children can choose the way in which they wish (and are able) to respond; and that adding options does not reduce the diversity of contributions. Clearly the discourse that uses ‘childish’ to describe child friendly research methods does not acknowledge the status of children’s activities within their lives; and appears to miss the diversity that is possible in (social constructivist-inspired) child-friendly research approaches.

At a more general level, the employment of accessible research methods has been criticised for becoming seen as a panacea for ensuring participatory research outcomes (Hammersley, 2014). This criticism is valid in cases where participatory outcomes are unthinkingly assumed. However, accessible research methodology and research methods are essential requirements if children are to become meaningfully engaged in research.

Turning to the epistemological challenges of child-led research, training children in research skills might be seen as reverting to the paradigm of children as incomplete beings in need of development (Uprichard, 2008). Simultaneously there was the potential for adult researchers’ own epistemological views to be imprinted on child researchers.

‘Good’ academic research was generally defined by adults as meeting a range of epistemologically, ontologically and methodologically exacting standards (Kim, 2016). A lack of research skills could diminish the quality and value of child-led research. However, acquiring those skills hazards child researchers being differentiated from other children and the way children see the world. At the root of this dilemma was an adult view driving how research should be conducted. Furthermore that view included a tendency to desire generalisation of research findings (Kim, 2016). Alternative ways of valuing children’s research could be developed; ideally collaboratively with children, underpinned by social constructivist approaches, which recognise that children have unique understandings and valid views about their own experiences of the world and phenomena, such as physical activity. The development of credibility, dependability and transferability criteria used to

ensure the reliability of qualitative data could provide unforeseen benefits (Tisdall, 2012). Engaging children's natural curiosity about the world, using the inquiry skills they used in day-to-day life, could lead to authentically child-centred data creation and analysis.

3.6 Moving towards an 'agentic child-guided' model

The key critiques of children's participatory research informed the development of this study's participatory approach. I acknowledged that studies were shaped by my adult researchers' knowledge, skills and motivations for undertaking the research, and my adult-centric beliefs about children's abilities and stature in society. I remained sensitised to tensions between adult-centric conceptions of participation, as being consulted or taking part, and children's conceptions of participation as having their actions recognised (Bucknall, 2009,). I also remained persuaded that participatory research was capable of empowering and enabling children to express and have their views heard. This was particularly possible where, as in this study, children were researching and expressing views about their own lived experiences. Nonetheless a new model for conducting participatory research with children (i.e. one which facilitated children's participation throughout the research process) was needed to investigate children's lived experiences of their chosen physical activity. The research model needed to a) address power imbalances between adult and child participants, b) position children so that they could genuinely influence the shaping and conduct of the research, and c) preserve children's agency to participate at whatever level and way they chose.

The AChiG model used Mason and Urquhart's (2001) defining features for models of participatory research (as outlined in Section 3.5.2). The AChiG model was grounded in a social constructivist and phenomenological ideological framework, in which children were viewed as competent social actors with unique insights into their lived experiences of physical activity. First and foremost, the AChiG model sought to appropriate individual children's unique knowledge of their own experiences and ways of viewing the world. Children were positioned as coresearchers. This recognised that children were frequently not the initiators and leaders of research studies. As coresearchers they could have an

active role in guiding and shaping the whole research journey. This stretched beyond the selection of child-friendly research methods and provided opportunities to shape research questions, guide data analysis and dissemination of the research. A distinguishing feature of the AChiG model was the way in which participation was facilitated. Participation was based on the individual needs of each participant, through continuous reflexive practice, which simultaneously enabled each participant to contribute when and how they wished. This led to individual pathways through research studies, which were compatible with the objects of research focused upon individual, non-generalisable outcomes. In other words, the research model did not set out to provide data which could be generalised. Instead each individual coresearcher would contribute what was important to them in their lived

Table 1 Agentic child-guided (AChiG) model of children's participation adapted from Mason and Urquhart's (2001) framework of Models of Participatory Research.

Mason and Urquhart's features of participatory research	Agentic child-guided (AChiG) approach to participatory research
Initiation and participation strategy	Children invited to join research initiated by an outside agency with freedom to decline. Children have agency to decide their ongoing participation, to choose their method and times of participation and have freedom to drop in and out of research programmes.
Ideological framework	Social constructivist; Phenomenological and Autophenomenographical research approaches
Children viewed as	Competent, agentic social actors, with unique and relevant insights about their personal experiences; capable of influencing others but not necessarily representing a broader view of children
Locus of power	Collaborative power sharing in which children's views are equally valued alongside all others in the research
Needs identification	Individualised from listening to children and the researcher adopting a continuously reflexive approach to research relationships and processes.
Method of decision making	Guided by children as experts in how research questions about their lives can be best framed and investigated
Knowledge	Children as experts in their own lives, guide adults to better understanding, particularly of their embodied knowledge of phenomena and being in the world.
Professionals	Facilitate, enable through individual relationships with children
Children's voices	As far as possible authentic reports in children's own words and other means of expressing views about phenomena being studied.

experiences, which would in turn contribute to a rich gathering of children's standpoints about physical activity. This gathering of standpoints might provide potential avenues for further research.

The application of a phenomenological methodology distinguished the AChiG from existing models of participatory research with children, for example from Mason and Urquhart's (2001) adult, child's rights or child movement models. Children were not only coresearchers but key sources of data. Each coresearcher was engaged in an autophenomenographic investigation, having unique viewpoints about research processes which might best reveal and report their experiences. Each coresearcher was recognised as an expert about their unique experience of the phenomenon being investigated; and worked collaboratively with the researcher to guide each stage of the research process. This potentially provided insights beyond the (adult) researcher's capability.

The home-based context of the study was an important distinguishing feature of the study. By approaching 7 to 11 years old children as individuals, rather than as pupils or youth/physical activity group members, the coresearchers were subject to different agendas and socio-cultural norms shaping their behaviours and responses.

Coresearchers participated in research using their existing skills and competencies to collect, sort and reflect upon data about their activities, engaging their natural curiosity in exploring what they chose to do and why. They were free to suggest methods of data collection and to opt in and out of the research process.

Simultaneously the home-based context of the study facilitated the development of a power sharing co-dependency between the researcher and coresearcher at the heart of the AChiG model. I supported and facilitated coresearchers to reflect upon and articulate their experiences, whilst coresearchers educated me about their different viewpoints and approaches to engaging in and experiencing physical activity. Each of my relationships with coresearchers was different and based upon the needs of the coresearcher.

I maintained a constantly reflexive attitude, rooted in the social constructivist framing of the study which is detailed in Section 4.4. This became the 'glue' which connected the

free-flowing nature of research processes. Reflexivity about the nature and condition of each of the researcher/coresearcher working relationships comprised awareness of the individuality of each coresearcher; the social context which shaped coresearchers' understandings and beliefs, and the changes and variations in each coresearcher's circumstances over time.

In shaping the research journey reflexivity focused upon the nature of the journey that each coresearcher was taking towards assembling an overview of their free-choice activities; the way in which they collected data and then reflected upon what they had gathered. The focus was upon the effectiveness and impact of research methods in relation to each child's capability to express themselves, rather than the generalised competences of childhood (Hunleth, 2011).

Key components highlighting the importance of my reflexive attitude in maintaining children's agency within the AChiG research model are illustrated below in Figure 1. The model demonstrated the focus upon the establishment and maintenance of an effective collaborative coresearcher/researcher relationship at the heart of the study. This relationship supported the agency of the coresearcher over the whole research journey, within an environment in which coresearchers could express themselves authentically. A key question which illuminated my reflexive thinking is shown within each layer of support to the children's agentic participation in the study.

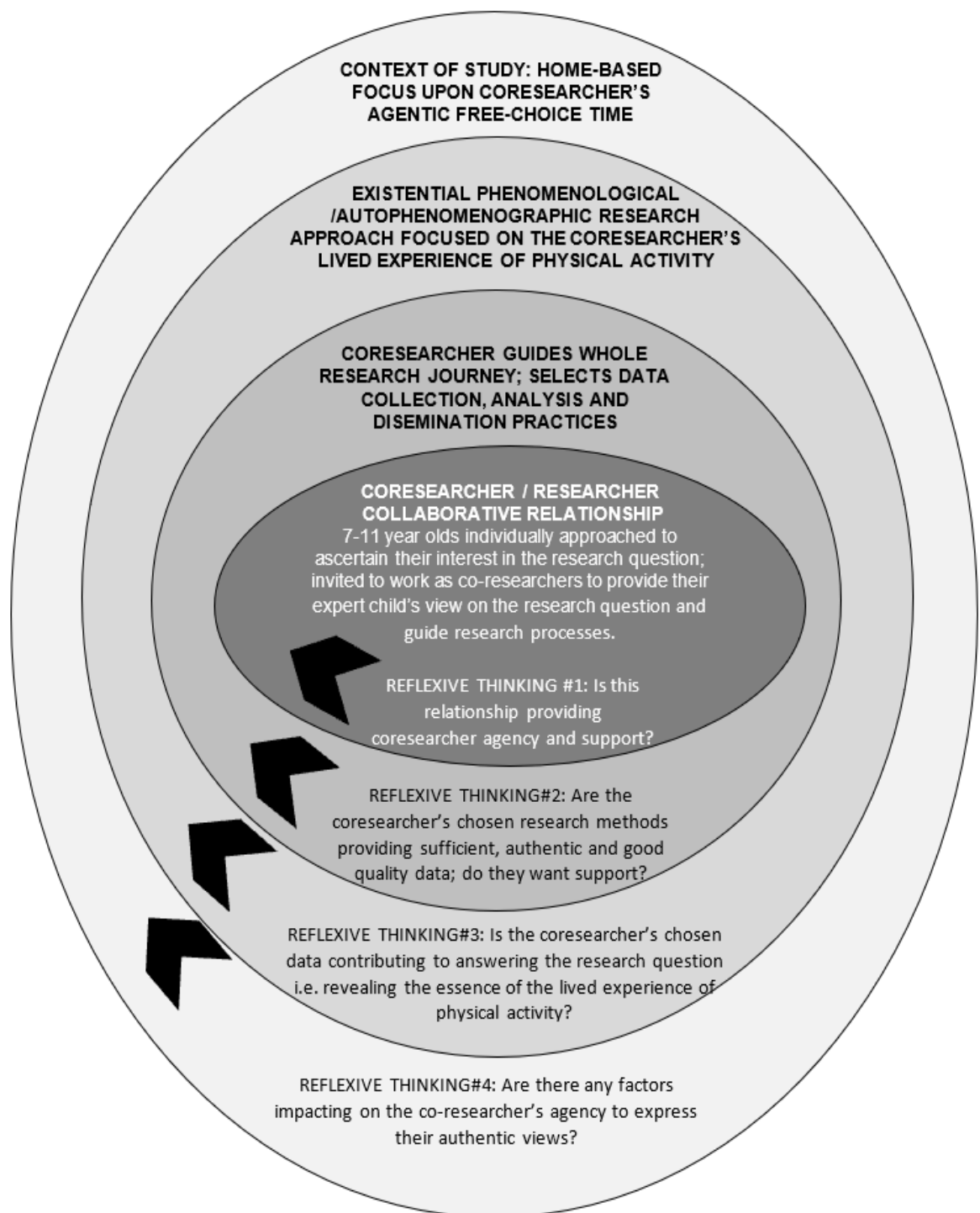


Figure 1 Schematic to show reflexive questions to support coresearcher agency

3.7 The theoretical framing of the AChiG research approach

Child research participants were purposefully positioned at the heart of the AChiG research approach as coresearchers, investigating their own embodied lived experiences of their chosen physical activity. In this model children were enabled to participate in the research process in ways they chose, at levels of commitment they were comfortable with and had the power to guide their own research journey (Marr and Malone, 2007). It was intended that children would be generating and constructing research data, whilst engaging in autophenomenographic (Allen-Collinson, 2011a) reflection about their own embodied physical activity experiences.

There has been much debate around the application of first person phenomenological methodologies (see for instance Dennett, 2007; Drummond, 2007; Marbach, 2007; Roy, 2007). Dennett (2003) from a cognitive sciences perspective suggested first person accounts are always subject to the theorisation of the experiencing persons. In contrast, others highlighted the essential role of first person accounts in accessing consciousness that cannot be accessed by another (Marbach, 2007; Roy, 2007). I acknowledge Dennett's scepticism about accessing people's own consciousness and his concern about 'how wrong people often are about their own consciousness' (2007, p. 263). However Dennett himself offers a reassurance that people are only vulnerable to, not necessarily typically victim of illusion and distortion; and that 'by mutually cooperative and interactive exploration' (2007, p. 264) differences between the researcher and research participant can be reconciled. In addition, Dennett's (2007) position was motivated by seeking to incorporate subjective human experience into a naturalistic approach to phenomenology, (which he calls heterophenomenology), whereas this study is grounded in a social constructivist perspective. I therefore adopted Allen-Collinson's sociological approach and the term autophenomenography to characterise the child coresearcher's role 'as both researcher and participant in her/his study of a particular phenomenon' (2011b, p. 307). This highlighted the potential for children to not only provide valuable information, but also to guide research with reflective insight into their own physical activity experiences.

Notwithstanding my commitment to foregrounding coresearchers' agency, I also acknowledged that coresearchers made their choices as children within a socioecological and sociocultural context. For instance, they relied upon the support of a range of adults shaping their activity choices. The Literature Review (Chapter 2) demonstrated the impact of teachers and coaches upon the availability and experiences of children's PE, school and community sport (see section 2.1/2.2) and the role of parents in financing and transporting children to activities (see section 2.3); factors at individual, community and policy level were identified in children's free-choice time (see section 2.2). Studies of socioecological and sociocultural factors impacting children's physical activity focused upon aspects such as children's gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity (see section 2.5). In addition, the outermost layer of the schematic to show layers of reflexive thinking at the heart of the participatory methodology (Figure 1) focuses factors external to children's intrinsic motivations to take part in physical activity which might impact coresearchers' views.

Figure 2 shows the theoretical framing of the AChiG research model, which brings together existential phenomenological and child-guided participatory research approaches to investigate a group of coresearchers' embodied experiences of physical activity. Important critiques of participatory research approaches were considered as part of developing the new AChiG research methodology. It was important to understand how to harness the benefit from children's active engagement in generating valuable autophenomenographical data. Figure 2 shows the subject of inquiry: How 7-11 years old children experience physical activity. This comprises, the social constructivist positioning of the research underpinning the combined participatory and existential phenomenological research methodology, which enabled the study of physical activity as an embodied experience. The new AChiG model placed emphasis upon the agency of child participants who guided the research. Children's agency was recognised in the ontological and epistemological positioning of children as agentic in socially constructing their views of the world. Children's ability to contribute to research into matters which affected them was recognised in collaborative researcher-coresearcher relationships which enabled children

to guide research. Finally, the AChiG model recognised the potential impact of external social and environmental factors by explicitly reflecting upon ways these might impact coresearchers' views and choices as part of the participatory methodology.

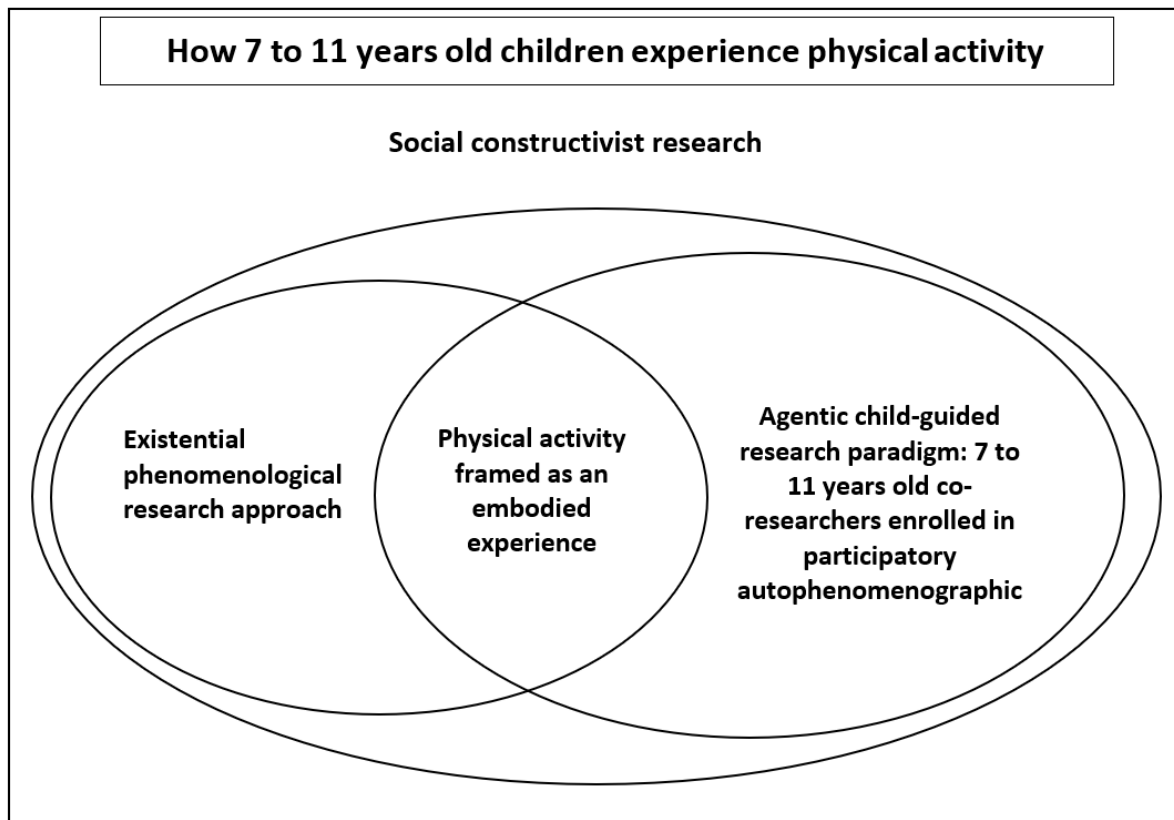


Figure 2 Schematic to show the theoretical framing of the AChiG participatory research

In this chapter I have set out the social constructivist ontological and epistemological positioning of the research. I then showed how bringing together principles of agentic child participatory research and an existential phenomenological research methodology, to suggest a new AChiG participatory research approach, appeared ideally suited to answer the study's research questions. In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I will set out the research design and different research methods that coresearchers pursued in their individual journeys through the research.

By applying the new AChiG research framework I was able to refine my research questions and foreground the importance of the participatory research methodology in the study aims as outlined below. It was hoped that this would avoid the problem of a

research design which failed to generate the knowledge that researchers wish to obtain (Ryba, 2008).

The developing research questions

Research aim:

To investigate the lived experiences of chosen physical activity in middle childhood, and to explore whether working towards a new child-guided participatory research approach might assist in revealing new insights.

Overall research questions:

- What do coresearchers say/do which reveals their perceptions and their beliefs about physical activity?
- Can a new agentic child-guided participatory research methodology generate greater insight into 7 to 11 years old children's experience of physical activity.

Research questions:

RQ1. What are the meanings that coresearchers invest in their chosen physical activities?

RQ2. How do coresearchers structure their chosen physical activities, in particular what are the factors impacting on their lived experience of physical activity?

RQ3. What is the essence of the experience of coresearchers' chosen physical activities?

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out how an AChiG approach to the study of children's lived experience of physical activity within their free-choice pursuits was achieved. Two pilot studies (outlined in Section 3.3) provided insights into children's experiences of physical activity. Insights together with lessons learned from conducting the pilot studies were formative in developing the AChiG approach to the main study.

In keeping with phenomenological methodologies, I start by setting out the importance of initiating a sustained reflexive disposition (Section 4.2.) to make transparent the beliefs and preconceptions that I brought to the study (Allen-Collinson, 2011b). I go on to set out how the principles enshrined in the AChiG research model guided the research design to ensure the quality of research. This is followed by the research methodology (Section 4.4) and data collection methods are mapped onto the research questions and discussed in detail in Section 4.5. In Section 4.6, I explain how the AChiG approach integrates participatory data analysis with the inductive coding of the coresearchers' data.

Adopting a virtuous (Iphofen, 2017) researcher approach, ethical considerations were embedded in the framing of research and throughout the research process. The chapter concludes by providing a synopsis of ethical considerations for the study, highlighting issues associated with carrying out research with children (Section 4.7).

4.2 Initiating a sustained reflexive disposition to the study

From a social-constructivist perspective, the description of a research phenomenon involves interpretation, and that interpreting would be impacted upon by my own biography, socio-cultural history, and the values and interests I brought to the research. I therefore needed to employ reflexive practices which would keep me alert to matters

within the inquiry, which my personal values and beliefs could impact upon in preparing knowledge (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Furthermore, taking an existential approach to phenomenology, I recognised the central position of the self in approaching the research situation (Heidegger, 1953).

Characteristically phenomenological perspectives (for instance transcendental, hermeneutic, existentialist) require the researcher to set out their preconceptions (variously and interchangeably known as 'bracketing', 'epoché' or 'reduction'), making their experience and the nature of how they had constructed their knowledge and understanding of phenomena clear to others. This information was then used to 'bracket' (or set aside) the researchers' socio-culturally situated beliefs and preconceptions about the world and phenomena being studied (Heidegger, 1927, translated by Staumbaugh, J.2010).

From a Husserlian transcendental phenomenological perspective, the object of bracketing is to free the researcher of preconceptions, enabling them to proceed with phenomenological analysis unencumbered. However, from an existential phenomenological perspective, it is never entirely possible to bracket out beliefs and preconceptions. Rather the researcher should then 'turn this knowledge against itself' (Manen, 1984, p. 46) to evaluate the potential ongoing impact that the researcher's preconceptions may have on the research process. In this way bracketing is a form of sensitisation for better understanding (Manen, 1984). Rather than treating bracketing as a one-off exercise at the start of research, the existential phenomenologist maintains this reflexive disposition throughout the research process. I initiated my reflexive attitude to the research by identifying and reflecting upon potential sources of bias associated with my attitudes and beliefs about a) children's capabilities as participants in research and b) my personal and professional experiences of physical activity.

4.2.1 Bracketing preconceptions about children's capabilities as coresearchers

The AChiG research model positions children as coresearchers with influence not only to contribute to but to guide research. This reveals my belief that children have unique insights into their own lived experiences, and that from these lived experiences, children can guide ethnographic and phenomenological approaches to research and fulfil the role of coresearcher. The focus of such research is upon the individual and does not place demands on coresearchers to contribute to a generalised view of children's lived experience of phenomena.

In the AChiG approach to research, child coresearchers are distinct from both child participants in adult-led research and from participants in child-led research; where children are supported to work independently in leading research of their own choosing (M Kellett, 2005). The AChiG research model depends upon child coresearchers being prepared and capable of participating collaboratively and guiding the adult researcher with their unique insight of their own lived experiences.

My extensive professional experience of working in collaborative and leadership roles with children and young people, leads me to agree with Clarke (2005), Kellet (Mary Kellett, 2005) and others, who believe that even young children are capable of contributing to research about matters which involve them. Furthermore, I believe that children have the actual and latent competencies required to guide collaborative research into their lived experiences of childhood with adult researchers. These competencies are seen to comprise such things as the ability to: discuss and develop ideas with others; reflect upon experiences, thoughts and feelings; identify relevant information and distinctively to express themselves in a child's way, bringing a child's view of the phenomenon being studied, unaltered by adult structures and systems of thinking. The AChiG model aims to nurture coresearchers' competencies as they practise them in the research situation. The adult researcher facilitates and enables the coresearcher to achieve their desired research participation and goals. Reflexivity on the researcher's behalf alerts the researcher to situations where this support is potentially useful. Simultaneously,

continuous reflexivity is intended as an effective tool to manage potential adult-child power imbalances within a collaborative research endeavour.

Notwithstanding my strength of belief and commitment to the concept of the agentic child, I remained conscious of the danger of over-stating the value of participatory research (Thomson and Gunter, 2007; Hammersley, 2017) and the role of children in researcher roles. I remained, for instance, mindful of the potential for people including children to be wrong about their own consciousness of their lived experiences (Dennett, 2007). This led me to the second significant source of preconceptions and beliefs the researcher brings to this study.

4.2.2 Reflexivity about my experiences of physical activity

There has also been a recent growth in writing about the need for reflexivity and the importance of a reflexive approach to children's research, often associated with the ethics of research with children (Berger, 2015; Canosa, Graham and Wilson, 2018). This has given rise to different interpretations and meanings attributed to reflexivity. For instance D'Cruz et.al. (2007) in their critical review of reflexivity in social work research and practice identify three interpretations. The first frames reflexivity as a personal skill enabling practitioners to react to immediate situations. The second, as:

‘an individual's self-critical approach that questions how knowledge is generated and, further, how relations of power operate in this process’(2007, p. 75)

This approach has two key implications for this study. As the researcher it foregrounds the need for me to recognise that coresearchers socially construct their own meaning of physical activity underpinning their choices and experiences. I need to set aside my own understanding, beliefs and experiences about physical activity. Furthermore, I need to be sensitive to my own and other adults' impacts upon child coresearchers participating in the research. Coresearchers need to feel empowered to freely express their views and guide research processes. Simultaneously, I need to be aware of how others such as parents, coaches and peers can shape coresearchers' lives and how this might impact

their physical activity experiences and choices. The third approach, which I have adopted in this study, builds upon the second to also include potential insights that may arise by reflecting upon our emotional response to a situation. I recognised that pilot data collection activities elicited embodied, emotional and aesthetic memories of my own

130916 MEM FIELD GEO and GAR

GEO very mature even sophisticated and bright and energetic. Confident and reflective about her interests and skills e.g. reflecting on her skills being good with words because she reads a lot and that this enables her to be very creative.

GAR also bright and interested in the project. Less confident than GEO, perhaps a little shy but certainly confident enough to engage with me. Why would I make this comparison? Is there a danger in treating GAR differently as the younger sibling? Interesting that this is how I have described his disposition. Also, conscious that the children shared an iPad. I recall thinking that from experience with the piloting project when children 'couldn't help themselves' but to take dozens and often multiples of pictures, that this may be a way of curbing enthusiasm if they had to share. After the event this doesn't seem so fair or reasonable an action.

Reflexive thinking 1: Assumptions and forming relationships with coresearchers

participation in physical activity. For instance, the elated sense of my body in flight trampolining or in gymnastics movements. I need to be reflexive to recognise these emotional responses, to try to set them aside and ensure they do not influence observation and discussion with coresearchers about their experiences.

Good practice in phenomenological research seeks to make explicit what researchers did to establish and sustain a reflexive approach (Allen-Collinson, 2011a) and to assess the

impacts of a reflexive approach. Therefore, in this research I attempt to clearly set out what

I did to sustain a reflexive approach and provide an explicit evaluation of the study's reflexive processes. I do this in three ways. Firstly, I explicitly integrated reflexive thinking in the design of the research methodology evidenced by:

- Foregrounding reflexive thinking to support coresearcher agency in the proposed AChiG model of participatory research (see Section 3.6, Figure 1)
- Integrating reflexive thinking in the writing up of the study to make researcher reflexivity as transparent as possible. This comprises reflexive thinking boxes throughout the reporting of the study to illustrate the reflexive processes in each layer of the AChiG model. For instance, Figure 1 captures a moment in which I

challenge my different responses to two siblings and reflect upon the potential impact of the siblings sharing an iPad for data collection.

Secondly, before embarking on the study, I identify potential preconceptions that I might bring to the research topic and to researching with children as coresearchers. Finally, I committed to reflect, at the close of the study, upon the effectiveness and impact of the explicit application of a reflexive approach on the conduct of research and research findings.

Potential pre-conceptions I bring to the study

My own very active childhood, together with my professional concern about reports of children's low physical activity levels, and the lack of research which engages children in phenomenological studies of their physical activity experiences (as outlined in Chapter 2: Literature Review), are both potential sources of preconceptions. Recognising this, I foregrounded potential sources of bias by setting out key formative experiences in both my personal and professional relationship with physical activity as child and adult (see Appendix III); illustrated in extracts which follow in Reflexive thinking 2 "Me and physical activity". In doing so, I became conscious of the sights, smells and the feelings of those childhood activity memories, and the positive affective states which the reflections evoked in me. I hoped to make transparent my socially constructed, embodied memories of key physical activity experiences. I then reflected upon my professional engagement in children's physical activity services, which evoked feelings of frustration about existing research and research practices with children and young people.

The final stage of this reflexive bracketing process was to turn that thinking on itself (Manen, 1984) to recognise the possibility that what I had recalled and expressed may have been ill-conceived. There was a potential flaw in these reflections. Whilst I have been an expert in the physical activity experiences of my childhood self, as I reflected back upon those experiences I did so as an adult, no longer that child expert. I could only reflect as an expert about how my experiences shaped my attitudes to physical activity.

As that adult, I saw patterns and clues about how my childhood physical activity experiences shaped my adolescent and adult physical activity, attitudes and experiences. Furthermore, I could identify key influences and influencers. For instance, I recalled my parents' support and enthusiasm, playing with my older brother and the setting of my home and large garden in a rural location to roam. In the existential phenomenologist tradition, I wrestled with the certainty that as my childhood self, I might have recognised little of the reality I describe here.

I needed to understand that I was remembering my lived experience as a child, as a remembering adult (Briod et al., 2011). I acknowledged the existential phenomenologist dilemma of never fully being able to free myself of all preconceived ideas and beliefs, nor fully enter the child's world (Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen and Määttä, 2012). Furthermore, as a piece of existential phenomenological research, I was not seeking to identify, theorise or problematise universal characteristics of children's lived experiences. As imperfect as bracketing might be, an existential phenomenological approach to the study enabled me to gain authentic glimpses of a specific group of coresearchers' life worlds. I embraced an existential phenomenological approach to bracketing created by the researcher's commitment to the continuous process of setting aside their adult thinking (Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen and Määttä, 2012). Initial reflexive bracketing, therefore, became the springboard for continued operationalised and embedded reflexivity as a key component of the AChiG participatory research model (see Figure 1). The same reflexive attitude also helped to foster the child-guided research perspective, and research methodology.

“Me and Physical Activity”

About Swimming

Saturdays were reserved for galas which I remember as cold, grey, rainy afternoons, parents shouting support from umbrellas and excited team mates all around. I felt sick and was beaten at the moment I took to the starting block; nervous tension seizing up every muscle. Always last in.

About Ballet

Ballet was different. Ballet started at 5 years old like many children as a fun hobby and turned into a passion for 12 years. I have never found a pursuit with the uplifting combination of rigour, endeavour and expression that ballet demanded. After a 90 minute seniors class, leg muscles would be in spasm and I was often bodily exhausted. However, the introductory piano chords for the closing complex salutation would always trigger a surge of emotion that ran like a tidal wave through the body.

Professional engagement in children’s physical activity

I often found myself acutely frustrated and at odds with much of the policy and practice of physical activity participation provision in England. A focus upon structured forms of traditional sport and competition appeared to dominate discussion and limit the introduction of the full range of physical activity which can become part of children’s day-to-day life. My work in community physical activity showed me the tremendous potential of children and young people not only as consumers of physical activity opportunities but also as leaders of physical activity.

Simultaneously research and reporting of children’s activity levels and motivations for physical activity always fell short for me in reflecting that potential.

Concluding reflection

In arriving at this study, whilst I believe I have made make a cogent case for the shortcomings of national sport and physical activity policy, I have to also recognise that my position on this issue is heavily influenced by my own physical activity experiences and preferences. Traditional sport and competition can be highly motivating for some children and adults. Simultaneously, it may be that for some there is no form of physical activity that engages them. Physical activity may not have the capacity to touch every person in a life enhancing, emotional or spiritual way. As a practitioner it is appropriate to hold on to the hope it can, as a researcher it is important to recognise that I shouldn’t.

Reflexive thinking 2: Initial bracketing thoughts

Retaining a reflexive attitude throughout the study

In section 3.6 'Moving towards an 'agentic child-guided' model', I highlighted the importance of reflexivity as 'the 'glue' which connects the free-flowing nature of research processes' characteristic of the developing AChiG participatory model of research. I went on to show schematically layers of reflexive questions. These were used as prompts to prepare reflexive memos and notes throughout the study (See Section 3.6 Figure 1).

Reflexive questions were focused upon providing coresearcher agency at the heart of the AChiG approach. Importantly, questions were also open and allowed for the capturing of free-ranging thoughts and ideas associated with each layer of the model to achieve coresearcher agency. The approach to collecting and collating memos was fluid and inclusive. Fluid to include the capture of informal momentary thoughts alongside more formally planned reflections for instance following observation events. Inclusive to capture any and all reflections which might be of value to the study. Some reflexive thinking is in the moment shown in a first person record of thoughts whilst others demonstrate a conscious connection with the writing up of the research often demonstrated in a third person voice in the record. This reflexive strategy became an integral part of the qualitative approach to data generation with coresearchers. Reflexive thinking is evidenced by providing examples of reflexive thinking in boxes throughout the writing up of the study. Limitations on the length of the study meant that only a small range of examples could be given providing a sense of the nature, timing and impact of reflexive thoughts on the conduct of the research. Reflexive thinking boxes, although they are taken from a sustained reflexive approach do not provide a coherent or continuous narrative of reflection. Reflexive thinking was captured from the start of the research but included only from this point forward in this report of the study. The production of reflexive thinking memos was sometimes quite intense for instance in establishing coworking relationships with coresearchers and initial stages of data analysis. At other times the production of memos was sporadic triggered for instance by an encounter with a coresearcher; their data or even literature. By this method I hoped to respond to Allen-

Collison's (Allen-Collinson, 2011a) call to make explicit what I did to establish and sustain a reflexive approach.

Examples of the reflexive questions for use during the research process are shown within

EXTRACT 170423 MEM PRO Positioning co-researchers as something more than research participants

Reflection: When writing up observation notes, I found myself using the words 'research participant' and quickly changed it to 'co-researcher'. This led to the question 'what's in a name?' and 'why was I so concerned to check myself and the writing of my own observation notes to take out the term 'research participant'? I recalled Mayall (1990) highlighting the use of the term 'pupil' rather than child in education studies and policy papers. This she saw as manifestation of adults subordinating children. She saw the term as a means of establishing the role of the child as the learner in a didactic relationship with the adult teacher who taught removing the possibility of a more shared learning relationship.

Reflexive thinking 3: Positioning coresearchers

the new AChiG model (Figure 1). Preparation of reflexive memos, such as the exemplar extract from a reflexive memo which follows, supported the sustained reflexive process, demonstrating the process of reflexive thinking and the way reflexive thoughts were captured. The example in Reflexive thinking 3 is typical of the sort of reflective thinking, in this case about establishing the coresearcher-researcher power sharing relationship during the research process. Creating reflexive memos helped me to review the potential impact that my thinking and behaviour may have had on coresearchers and also on the interpretation of their data, and on the conduct of research. Operationalising reflexive thinking using reflexive memos was a way of foregrounding and making a reflexive attitude transparent. It helped to counteract criticism of much qualitative research, which fails to provide sufficient details of the ethical conduct of research and of research methods to ensure the quality, authenticity and transferability of research (Ahern, 1999; Tufford and Newman, 2012). Reflexive thinking 3 is illustrative of the reflexive thinking boxes found throughout the reporting of the study at key points in the conduct of the research.

4.3 Steps to ensure the quality of research

Ontologically, qualitative research perspectives contend that there are multiple and changing realities of the world and phenomena. This ontological perspective is complemented epistemologically by the view that realities and truth are interpretations of experiences, constructed by individuals as they interact with the world and phenomena (Robson, 2011; Hammersley, 2012). Realities and truth do not exist outside of the person to be independently and objectively assessed for reliability and validity. This has led to the development of more appropriate alternative measures that can be applied to qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln's (1994) use of trustworthiness and authenticity are adopted in this research, because these arise from qualitative research rather than as some other measures adapted from quantitative measures.

Ensuring the trustworthiness of research recognises the possibility of multiple truths about the world that cannot be measured by finite means to prove validity. The trustworthiness of research, therefore, relies on the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of research methods. The measure of credibility of research findings is based firstly upon the way in which research is carried out. It is important to demonstrate that research methods, and the way in which methods are implemented, are capable of addressing the research question. This study applied good practice in the implementation and methods used.

Research results should be deemed credible by those associated with the enquiry. Using the AChiG model, coresearchers who are the key personnel associated with research, are encouraged and enabled to participate in all aspects of inquiries. Credibility is strengthened by the participation and guiding role that coresearchers can command throughout research inquiries. Coresearchers consider the subject of research and relevance of the inquiry to them before enrolling onto the research team. They select and develop data collection and analysis methods and contribute to reporting results. At the close of research coresearchers provide critical feedback on research methods. Multiple sources of data are collected to triangulate results and findings. Coresearchers for

instance can invite the researcher to observe their activities, provide photographic and video data, generate data from interviews and discussion.

Qualitative studies do not generally set out to be generalisable. However, transferability that supports trustworthiness of research can be found in the rich description of the coresearchers' experiences of physical activity in phenomenological studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). High quality data is characteristically sufficiently detailed for others to assess the application and potential transferability of the data. Great emphasis is placed upon the transparency of data collection and analysis methods, to ensure amongst other aspects that research can be replicated.

The replicability of qualitative research is associated with evidencing the dependability of studies. The AChiG model of research uses appropriate theoretical framing of studies, together with research design and methods which address both coresearchers' questions and theoretically-framed research questions. The concept of research questions developing during the research process is characteristic of qualitative research (Punch, 2005), and is addressed later in Section 4.4.1 in relation to the AChiG model of research. The choice of research methods was captured in reflexive memos at each stage of the research, and interim reports were created reporting the process of modelling and framing of data during analysis. Meanwhile, the confirmability of the research is supported by coresearchers guiding the early stage of analysis, sorting and grouping data under relevant headings. Coresearchers both guide research processes and are sources of data, investigating their own lived experience of the phenomenon being studied.

Authenticity complements measures of trustworthiness by focusing on the wider political impact of research. The authenticity of research is assessed by the fairness of the way it represents those associated with the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The AChiG approach to participatory research enables children to be represented in their own voice, through their own actions and as a result of research they have guided in collaborative relationships with adult researchers. The guiding role that coresearchers fulfil supports children's agentic position in the world and their capability and right to be involved in

researching matters that affect them. This is central to the design and implementation of the study emphasised in their role as coresearchers. Coresearchers lead data collection, selecting and adapting data collection and analysis methods facilitated by the adult researcher. As research progresses coresearchers can identify their own research interests and influence the developing research questions. They participate in analysis of their data and the production of their own accounts of their lived experiences. Additional reports from studies are made available for critical review. Coresearchers are encouraged to participate in the dissemination of study results, identifying people they wish to share research results. In this way the AChiG approach can fulfil an emancipatory role within childhood research, providing an authentic voice of children's lived experiences.

4.4 Research Methodology

The AChiG research methodology combines existential phenomenological and participatory child research methodologies developed from the conceptual framing of the study summarised in Figure 2 at the close of the last chapter. Figure 3 below shows the potential coming together of the adult researcher and coresearchers to agree to investigate a phenomenon which is within the lived experience of child coresearchers, and in which researcher and coresearcher have a shared interest. The researcher supports and nurtures coresearchers' existing skills and competencies, at first facilitating through suggestions and ideas, later enabling coresearchers to adapt and make choices about data collection and analysis activities. The researcher seeks to develop each coresearchers' growing independence as the study progresses.

Coresearchers bring their own view of the world and natural research competencies to the research (shown in red). Using these unique insights coresearchers investigate their own lived experiences of a phenomenon (Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2015). Specific research questions emerge as research progresses, as coresearchers become more knowledgeable and engaged in the process of inquiry, as is set out in Section 4.4.1 below.

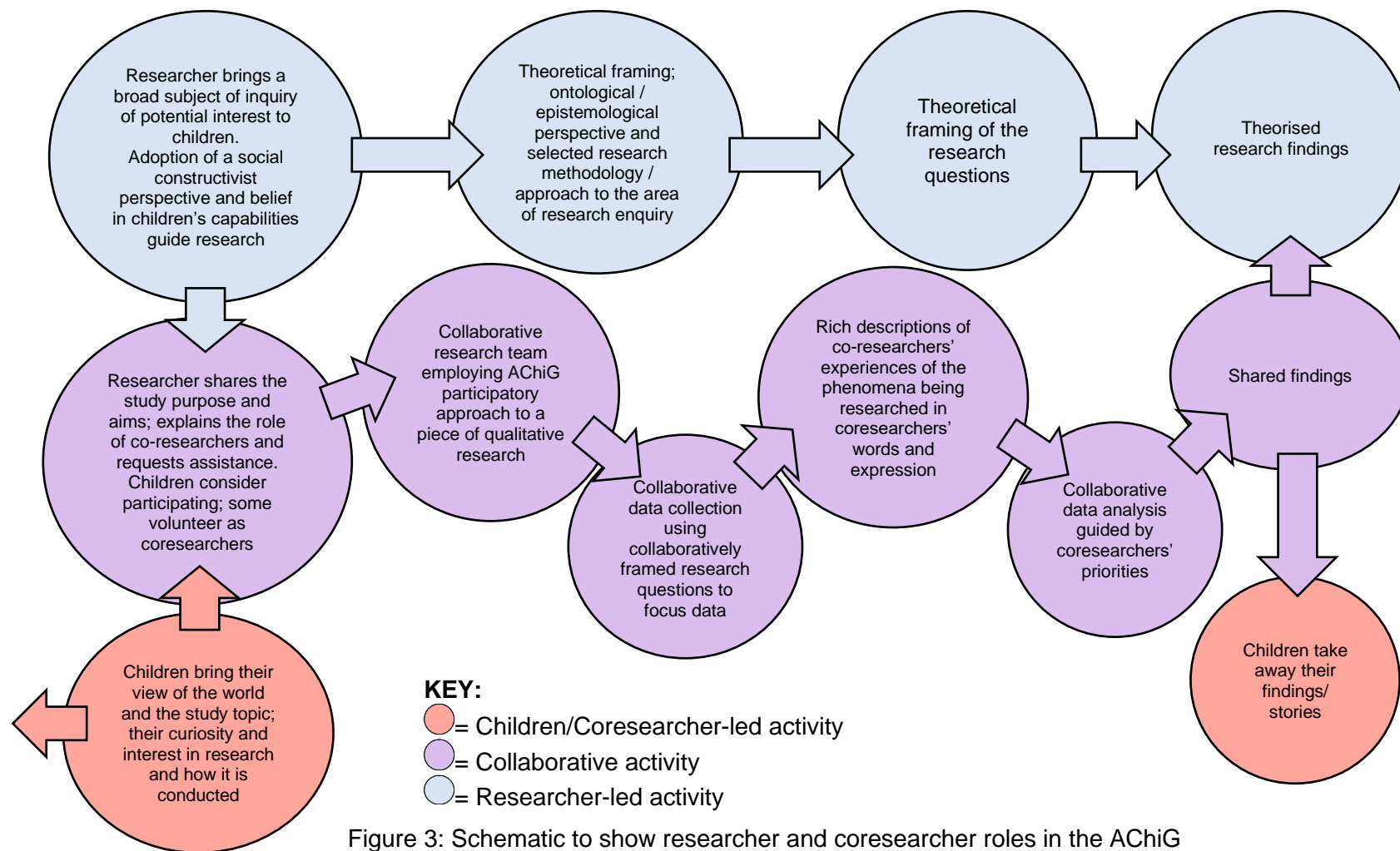


Figure 3: Schematic to show researcher and coresearcher roles in the AChIG

A mosaic approach (Clark, 2001) to data collection and analysis methods enables coresearchers to select and suggest methods as they gain experience of research processes (see Sections 4.4 and 4.5). Research processes leading to the co-creation of rich descriptions of the phenomenon being studied are shown in purple in Figure 3. Rich descriptions of each coresearcher's experience of the phenomenon studied, are prepared, which coresearchers can take away from the research (shown in red).

Simultaneously the adult researcher frames the ontological and epistemological research perspective, research methodology and theoretically-framed research questions which underpin the participatory phenomenological research approach (shown in blue). The adult researcher is then able to further interrogate coresearchers' rich descriptions of the phenomena, using questions which arise from the ontological and epistemological framing of the research. This can lead to insights into factors which shape the experiences revealed in the description of the phenomena.

4.4.1 Initiating and developing the research question

The AChiG research model adopted the concept of research questions developing throughout studies, typical of much real world qualitative research (Robson, 2011). The AChiG research approach requires the adult researcher to remain sensitive throughout the research to coresearchers' own potential interests in guiding the inquiry. As inexperienced researchers, coresearchers are enabled to grow their understanding of the subject of inquiry as they engage in data collection and analysis processes. As they develop confidence and experience, they become more equipped to identify ways in which they might wish to guide research. Coresearchers may require assistance for instance in developing research skills, such as planning and developing data collection, sorting and ordering their data. They may want practical support, for instance, taking photographs and videos in which, they appear to demonstrate their activities.

4.4.2 Sampling and enrolment of coresearchers.

During enrolment, coresearchers are introduced to the general subject of inquiry.

Coresearchers' opinions and ideas are probed and encapsulated in the development of working research questions as part of engaging coresearchers' interest. The researcher needs once again to be reflexively aware of the coresearchers' focus of interest during data collection, sampling and enrolment of coresearchers.

The potential interests of coresearchers, together with a number of pragmatic and operational issues, impacted on the selection of a sample of coresearchers. The aim of AChiG participatory research is to enable coresearchers to collaboratively prepare rich descriptions of the essence of lived experiences of the phenomenon being studied. This research does not seek to generalise the essence of that lived experience, only at most to identify across different individuals, possible aspects which might be transferable to others and worthy of further study. The researcher was therefore seeking to enrol sufficient coresearchers to answer the developing research questions, in keeping with a small-scale piece of qualitative real-world research (Robson, 2011). I anticipated that a convenience sample of nine 7 to 11 years old children would be needed. The study could accommodate up to three withdrawals, whilst still generating a body of data from which rich descriptions of a breadth of coresearcher's experiences could be prepared.

The study focused upon coresearchers' free-choice activities. Therefore, data collection needed to take place in the natural settings of coresearchers' private homes and community activity spaces. The sharing of these spaces with an adult researcher, whether in person as an observer or through coresearchers' images, could have impacted not only the coresearchers but also other participants, families and friends. Strong positions of trust needed to be established swiftly for me to be welcomed into coresearchers' personal spaces and complete the research in the time available.

A pragmatic response to the challenge of enrolling coresearchers was needed.

Coresearchers needed to be reasonably geographically accessible to enable me to visit them at home and to observe and share their community-based activities. A network of

adult friends and colleagues within a 90-minute journey time were targeted, with whom I already had a position of trust.

Initial enquiries led to introductions to seven children, five girls and two boys. Probably a reflection of my own community sport background, four of this initial group had at least one parent who was involved in a sport related occupation; one actively involved in promoting children's physical activity. I was aiming only for a convenience sample of those willing to share their personal space and time with me. However, I was mindful that if I could address the imbalance of gender and occupational influence of sporty parents this would add breadth to the coresearcher team sample. Deliberate efforts were then made to try to balance the gender balance and identify potential male coresearchers who did not have parents working in sport or physical activity. An advertisement on the University intranet brought forward a further two coresearchers. These final enrolments helped address imbalances and also enriched the sample by the introduction of a coresearcher with Asian cultural heritage. Table 2 gives a summary of the coresearchers' characteristics. The coresearchers, four boys and five girls, were all attending primary school, studying the UK Key Stage 2 curriculum, and aged between 7 and 10 years at the start of the research. They came from different sized families and held different positions within sibling orders. Their schools spanned public and private provision, including day and part-time boarding school. The coresearchers' families spanned a breadth of socio-economic circumstances, parental occupations and experiences with physical activity. There was little cultural diversity across the group of coresearchers, with one coresearcher having an Asian heritage and the remainder white British.

161012 MEM PRO Forming relationships with research participants – extracts

Harry immediately won my heart. ... On reflection I had warmed to all my young co-researchers but each in a different way. I am conscious that this is different to the way that I form relationships with adults which is much more measured. I am not so delighted or surprised by the warmth and fun of adults I meet anew possibly. I suppose I am showing a rather maternalistic view towards children – worse perhaps in being charmed by Harry, I demonstrate a surprise about his personal attributes which I shouldn't; children as 'surprisingly articulate and able socially' – a tendency to infantilise.

Reflexive thinking 4: Checking my attitude towards coresearchers

Table 2 Summary of sample of coresearcher characteristics

Coresearcher name	Georgia	Gareth	Harry	Vixen Swift	Reilly	IAgwwP	Jay	Beach Girl	Danny
Gender	F	M	M	F	F	F	M	F	M
Age / School Year at start	9yrs/ Yr.4	8yrs/ Yr.3	9yrs/ Yr.4	10yrs/ Yr.5	9yrs/Yr.4	10yrs/ Yr.5	7yrs/ Yr.2	10yrs/ Yr.5	11yrs/ Yr.6
Sibling order*	1/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	3/4	1/1	5/5	4/5	1/3
* 1/1= only child; 1/2 = 1st or eldest of 2 children; 5/5 = youngest of five children etc.									
Type of school	State	State	State	Private	State Middle School	Private p/t boarder	State	State	State
Parent 1 occupation	University Sport and Fitness Lecturer		Administrator	Marketing Executive	Swimming instructor and teacher	University Sport and Fitness Lecturer	Care worker		Administrator
Parent 2 occupation	IT Manager		Health worker	Journalist	MD Sport Coaching Company	Not provided	Self-employed builder		IT Executive

I initially informed coresearchers' parents about the research in short informal meetings,

170423 MEM PRO Positioning co-researchers- as something more than research participants – extract

... I cannot ignore the fact that an adult-child relationship exists within the researcher-coresearcher relationship. The fact remains that children aged 7-11 years do not have full agency. This is reflected from the outset in the process of engaging coresearchers which has to be via the initial approval of parents/carers. One particular example illustrates the problem of children's agency well. In a family of siblings more than one of the siblings expressed an interest in participating in the research but were guided by parents that they had other time commitments that would not make this possible. This instance also serves to illustrate how the researcher has dealt with potential concerns about agency of coresearchers. She takes the view that an ethnographic research environment cannot be without bias in one form or another. Rather than trying to remove all possible bias her approach is to reflect and make transparent any potential impact upon the research process.

Reflexive thinking 5: Children's agency to participate - or not

using information from the pilot studies to illustrate the type of study I was proposing. I then met with potential coresearchers to ascertain their interest in the area of study. It was important that coresearchers understood sufficient about the study to give informed consent to participate and this involved sharing information in an understandable form as openly as possible with coresearchers (Fargas-Malet *et al.*, 2010).

Characteristic of AChiG research is a specific discussion with children about

the role of children in research, and an exploration of the children's thoughts on the phenomenon that the researcher is interested in exploring with them. I explained my own feeling that adults often thought they understood lots about children's experiences of physical activity, but that I wondered if it was possible 7 to 11 years old children could know more and might be able to inform adults. Effectively, the coresearchers were asked to consider my proposition that it would be worthwhile to research how children experienced physical activity with child coresearchers guiding the research. I set out my initial thoughts about how this might work, focusing upon collecting data about what they chose to do in their free-choice time. Finally, we discussed the potential to share the outcomes of research with adults who had an influence upon their physical activity choices.

I gave children time to digest all that we had spoken about before seeking commitment to take part in the research. I left them and their parents with information about the study to accompanying requests for formal consent to participate. The study was framed as an

160923 Participant sample / Own position as researcher- extracts

I don't feel that my relationship with the Mums should influence the participants' responses to the research activities. I may have had a moment's concern that the parents' enthusiasms would be difficult for the children to resist and remained alert to the possibility of albeit positive and enthusiasm driven coercion when I met with the children but was quickly reassured. In every case Mums allowed me to chat with the children whilst they were in call in another room and the children appeared confident enough to be able to express any concern about taking part with me or to ask questions. In one case (IA) when we went through the child consent form she considered she was not sure that she understood everything about the research and decided to mark the questionnaire in a new middle box stating she neither understood nor didn't understand all about it. Both I and Mum applauded this very accurate response and we discussed how she could always ask for clarification about anything as we go along.

Reflexive thinking 6: Non-coercive children's consent

inquiry about “How 7 to 11 years old children experience physical activity”. Simultaneously the coresearchers’ consent forms simplified this further with the title: “What do you like to do in your playtimes?” (Appendix V) Effectively this ‘operationalised’ the theoretically-framed research questions, enabling the coresearchers to activate their inquiry and select data collection methods, swiftly paving the way to deepening understanding of the potential for inquiry as the researcher and each coresearcher worked together.

Data collection plan

In keeping with the AChiG participatory approach, I discussed with coresearchers a variety of data collection methods which could provide data to answer the research inquiry, which included the capture of photographic/video data, and invitations for me to accompany coresearchers to observe their activities. I went on to invite their ideas for data collection. Data collection methods addressed ethical as well as practical considerations of seeking coresearchers’ support. Methods were all accessible, designed to be interesting to coresearchers, and minimise the impact that participating in the research would have on coresearchers’ time and enjoyment of their activities. I maintained a flexible approach to data collection methods, to encourage and facilitate each coresearcher to participate as fully as possible, and to reveal the breadth of their experiences (Bushin, 2007).

Table 3 shows an initial range of data collection methods prepared for discussion with coresearchers. These data collection methods were able to address the theoretically-framed research question: “What do the coresearchers say/do which reveals their perceptions and beliefs about physical activity?” answered by the research sub-questions. Different data collection methods were triangulated against the sub-questions, to provide variety and depth of data, and to assist in strengthening the trustworthiness and authenticity of data collected. The quality of data collection to ensure authenticity, validity and applicability is discussed in Section 4.3.

Table 3 Summary of data collection methods for discussion with coresearchers

Theoretically framed research questions: “What do the coresearchers say/do which reveals their perceptions and beliefs about physical activity?” / Data collection methods	Coresearchers’ photographs and videos	Activity monitor data collection	Observation of coresearchers’ activities	Unstructured qualitative interviews/discussions (Data-elicited Photo/ video/ activity monitor data)	Researcher interviews with key adults coresearchers identify as facilitators of their activities
RQ1. What are the meanings that coresearchers invest in their chosen pursuits?				X	
RQ2. How do coresearchers structure their chosen pursuits, in particular what are the socio-cultural factors impacting on their lived experience of physical activity?	X	X	X	X	X
RQ3.What is the essence of the experience of coresearchers’ chosen pursuits?	X		X	X	

Because coresearchers were devoting their own leisure time to the research, they were not burdened by deadlines and targets, but reassured that whatever they were able to contribute to research activities such as data collection was valued. Every effort was made to make the process of data collection interesting and enjoyable, for instance providing novel activities comprising the use of Fitbit activity monitors to help recall active

and relaxed pursuits. Research activities were differentiated as much as possible from schoolwork, with completely open invitations to collect data the coresearcher felt relevant.

4.5 Data collection methods

The AChiG model focuses upon using different sources to provide connecting layers of data. This assists in the co-creation of an account of the coresearcher's physical activity choices and a gradual unfolding of the meanings coresearcher's attribute to physical activity. The use of creative data collection techniques, including a wide range of visual data, has become closely associated with child-centred research (Pink, 2007a; Lomax, 2012). The collection of visual data provides an accessible method of data collection using skills and competencies within the capability of a broad range of children; notably avoiding the challenge of verbal skills. Here I outline the merits of initial data generation methods introduced to coresearchers. These formed the basis of coresearchers' initial choices of data collection methods and the collaborative development of further data generation methods. In Chapter 5: Findings, I report the coresearchers' choices and the way they developed their research methods.

4.5.1 Coresearchers' photographs and videos (visual images)

I recommended the collection of photographs and video sequences (visual images) on iPads for initial consideration, because of the speed and ease with which coresearchers could get started. The use of digital technology was also well within 7 to 11 years old children's competency-levels and use of iPads and iPhones a common source of fun. Visual images were compatible with this study's phenomenological approach to prepare rich descriptions of coresearchers' experiences. Coresearchers could lead the collection of this sort of data with little or no adult supervision. This provides coresearchers with an independent voice, helping to redress any potential power imbalance (Russell, 2007) at an early point in the researcher/coresearcher relationship. Collecting data in this way could also be managed within coresearchers' day-to-day activities, making few demands on their time.

Simultaneously visual images themselves cannot depict a reality of an activity or its lived experience (Russell, 2007), because experiences are socially constructed through the coresearchers' social interactions with the world. There is no one reality to depict. Instead images have multiple meanings which will differ between people, over time and different contexts. However, visual images do have a relationship with reality (Pink, 2014) and can represent aspects of reality which are visible. Russell (2007) goes as far as saying that videoing children in a study served as a form of secondary observation. The coresearcher should, however, maintain control over the orchestration of visual images in their data. They should select and film activities themselves where images are referential and depict what they chose to do in their free-choice time. Alternatively, coresearchers can orchestrate images where they direct others to take images in which they may appear. It was important that I paid attention to how images were generated, to ensure the coresearchers had retained agency in how the images had been orchestrated and selected to be part of their data.

For this reason, I did not plan to seek permission to video coresearchers' activities myself, unless invited to do so. This could be potentially intrusive and emphasise a power imbalance, giving me the power to choose what I videoed, which was counter intuitive to coresearchers guiding data collection at the heart of the AChiG model of research.

Coresearchers' collected images could reflect the way in which they socially construct the reality of the activity they chose to depict. Images were seen as a form of language, chosen, constructed and produced by coresearchers who 'craft(ed) the image and made choices in doing so' (Hearn and Thomson, 2014). Furthermore, visual images were seen to provide access to ideas, knowledge and experiences that were difficult to represent using solely the written or spoken word. The experience of physical activity was not something people frequently discussed or thought about, and the use of visual images in this study were suggested to assist coresearchers in that task. Visual images were never purely visual, but mobilised the imagination and engaged other senses in an embodied

way (Pink, 2014), providing the potential to access a sense of the richness of the experience of physical activity.

A reflexive approach to the analysis of the visual images could therefore provide access to coresearchers' socially constructed realities. That reflexivity included the development of an understanding of the context in which the coresearchers prepared images; how they were produced and how they came to represent the coresearchers understanding and experience of physical activity. Attention to these properties of the images could sensitise the researcher to the changing nature of the reality of coresearchers' lived experience of activities from day-to-day, and to the different way each coresearcher experiences physical activity.

4.5.2 Activity monitor data – novel methods of data collection

Novel data collection methods have the potential to be sources of fun and to stimulate different types of discussion and thinking with coresearchers. In this study the potential to collect daily step counts was a novelty to coresearchers. Activity monitors were made available for each coresearcher to wear. This data was intended to provide a prompt for discussion about activities coresearchers had undertaken, and care was taken to ensure that coresearchers did not see the technology as a way of being judgemental about their physical activity levels. The identification of novel data collection methods had the potential to stimulate coresearchers' interests in different sources of data and encourage them to identify further different methods of collecting data.

4.5.3 Observation

Observation of coresearchers' free-choice time pursuits is both a primary method of data collection and supportive in corroborating data collection from other sources (Robson, 2011). Observation data can provide important core data because it gives access to 'the meaning of actions which make sense of the world' (Spradley, 1980). Coresearchers can demonstrate their physical activity experiences by sharing them with the researcher and provide a window through which to view those experiences. This together with a wish to

minimise disruption to coresearchers' activities led in this study to the suggested use of unstructured, naturalistic observation.

A flexible and open-ended approach frames observation as a 'stream of actions and events as they naturally unfold' (Punch, 2005, p. 179). Encouraging coresearchers to identify multiple opportunities to observe their chosen activities provided opportunities to observe a diverse range of activities, which could foreground different lived experiences. The researcher has to be flexible and open to responding to as many invitations to observe coresearchers as possible. This demonstrates the researcher's genuine interest in coresearchers' activities, and the value that the researcher places upon the opportunity to share those activities.

The nature of activities and of each coresearcher's invitation to observe their chosen activities shapes the researcher's approach to observation. The researcher needs to adopt different and sometimes multiple roles. These different observational roles, positioned on a continuum of outsider or insider to the observation event, provide access to different information and each approach carries different methodological challenges (Gold, 1958; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

170410 MEM PRO Observation and maintaining relationships with research participants
Ref OBS 170407 REI F Xtreme Camp- extracts

Not for the first time my initial meeting with Reilly felt slightly strained. Reilly seemed shy and rebuffed an initial high five greeting. ...

Simultaneously, ...Reilly's Mum often reported that Reilly had liked my going to watch her in her activities ... I couldn't help feeling that Reilly's enthusiasm for the study might be driven by her Mum's enthusiasm. In addition, my get-togethers with Reilly had always been a three way discussion with Mum joining in close by. That had worked well eliciting longer and more effusive responses than when alone including challenges to her Mum's views on matters which her Mum allowed to develop which was helpful to the overall conversation.

I consciously stood back from engaging with her throughout the day. I deliberately hung back but within sight of what Reilly was doing and so I could hear snatches of her conversation. I engaged with the group as a participant observer, gradually assisting the instructors in helping the children make an assault course for instance by lifting and helping them move overly heavy logs. In this way any assistance or contact with Reilly became consistent with any of the other children. When one of the instructors enquired about my visit to the day, I explained it in a way to include Reilly as she could hear our conversation and I wanted to ensure the instructor and children understood her status as an equal partner in the data collection.

Neither did I feel that Reilly's overall participation in the day was reserved or affected by my presence. Rather she ignored my presence. In contrast she engaged with the instructors with some enjoyment.

Reflexive thinking 7: Reflection on whether my presence was welcomed by the coresearcher

Constant reflexivity was needed to be aware of the potential impact of my presence, whether as outsider or insider. There was real potential to 'go native' in pursuit of a close collaborative relationship with coresearchers at the heart of the

MEM PRO 170414: Unobtrusive observation – joining in.

Possibly counter-intuitive but joining in a pottery painting session proved to be the most unobtrusive way of undertaking an observation of a child who the researcher had some concerns about in terms of her continued enthusiasm for being engaged in the research data collection.

Reflexive thinking 8: Unobtrusive observation

ACHiG model. The development of 'over-rapport' and empathy with coresearchers could lead to the suspension of an analytical mind-set 'in favour of the joys of participation' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 87) and the building of research relationships. However, in this study, the advantages of direct access to high quality, valid and reliable lived evidence data outweighed these challenges. It was possible to understand the research situation from within and gain greater insights, whilst maintaining the objectivity of the research inquiry. Furthermore, responding to invitations to share experiences is of particular importance in establishing the coresearchers' guiding role in the ACHiG approach.

Pragmatic methodological challenges also vary with different observational roles. Writing or recording field notes can be incompatible with participant observation. The quality and completeness of field notes is important for later recall and analysis of data. The observer becomes the instrument of the research (Robson, 2011), capturing information, assimilating and recording it with sufficient detail to bring the coresearchers' experiences alive. Free flowing notes which weave objective face value description of events, interlaced with reflexive thoughts and questions, provide the raw data for rich interpretations of the lived experiences observed. As Spradley observes, 'a wide observational focus often leads to some of the most important data' (1980, p. 56).

The smells, sights, sounds and atmosphere of the observation setting; the coresearchers' moods and movements; their social interactions and use of space within the setting; all contribute to the lived experience of coresearchers' chosen activities. Wherever possible direct quotes from talk during observations add layers of data and meaning. This rich,

multi-layered data capture assists in generating detailed descriptions to be shared and verified with coresearchers. As a consequence, considerable time was needed for the preparation of field notes and care was taken in the scheduling and management of the number of observations that can be achieved in the time available.

In this study, whilst either a participant as observer or observer as participant role (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) was preferred, some activities such as a Brazilian Soccer Skills session, could not accommodate participation. Adopting a spectating role was compatible with many coresearchers' activities, where parents commonly watched their children and the presence of observing adults was unremarkable and natural. In terms of generating phenomenological data, observation as a spectator is harder because the researcher can only interpret from what is observed and from their partial knowledge of the situation. It is easy to miss or misunderstand some observational information (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). However, this applies largely to non-participatory approaches and this is lessened in the AChiG participatory approach through the co-creation of data with coresearchers at the heart of research design.

4.5.4 Qualitative interviews/discussions

Many typologies of interviewing have been developed, for instance, based upon degrees of structure or standardisation (Fielding, N 1996 and Fontana and Frey 1994) or as categorised by Patton (2002): informal conversational style, general interview guided approaches and standardised open-ended interviews. Phenomenological inquiry is characterised by unstructured, non-standard and open informal conversationally-styled discussions generating qualitative data about lived experiences. These characteristics provide a context in which data can be generated collaboratively with a 'focus upon gathering rich complex meanings' (Bucknall 2010). The purpose of interviewing is to seek to understand what is in the coresearchers' heads in a relaxed environment, in which the coresearchers take a lead in the conversation and the researcher responds to the flow of the interview (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005). Simple questions initiate discussion and then move on to elicit information that may need more thought.

A reflexive attitude is maintained throughout conversations with the researcher choosing pertinent aspects of coresearchers' talk to encourage discussion. This can assist in avoiding formulaic responses that can occur, particularly in children, with lapses into socially normative behaviours, explaining images in ways which they have learned would be acceptable to adults (Coates, 2002).

The researcher needs to be aware of the context of meetings to ensure that the timing

MEM PRO 160925 Establishing rapport with research participants - extract Reflections from first meet with VS Creating rapport

There were moments when I felt that I was struggling to keep the conversation going but I also managed longer pauses than I had in previous meetings with children and realised that VZ naturally picked up the conversation from me then. I need to continue to develop my comfort zone in allowing pauses and silences.

'Doing stuff' e.g. petting the hamster is useful because it provides space for the child participants to lead off a discussion or the situation to offer a lead.

Reflexive thinking 9: Letting the coresearchers lead discussion

and environment are conducive to free flowing conversation (Bushin, 2007). For instance, the timings of meetings to discuss data needed to be convenient for the coresearchers and sensitive to their need for rest and recuperation and practical matters such as meal times (Bushin, 2007). In this study snacks on arriving home were an urgent priority for most coresearchers preceding after school meetings. Where

discussion takes place is important, particularly when the researcher is entering coresearchers' personal spaces such as their homes or community activity spaces. The researcher needs to find a way of joining the coresearcher in those spaces that is compatible with their developing relationship, so that they are not concerned by the researcher's presence. With location, different participants or onlookers to discussions become possible, including family members and friends. The researcher needs to be aware of the potential impact of others and ensure the coresearcher is at ease. In this study for instance, the researcher needed to develop friendships with non-participating siblings, whilst supporting parents to eject them when it was time to start work with the coresearcher. Simultaneously there were occasions when coresearchers, particularly younger coresearcher siblings, appeared more at ease working with the researcher together with their older sibling coresearcher.

The recording of discussions frees the researcher to participate fully in the flow of conversation and is an indicator of the coresearchers' confidence in the research process as a shared data generation activity. This informal conversational style interview approach not only provides the opportunity for rich data generation in which the coresearcher could take a lead, but can also help to build rapport with coresearchers, particularly in the early stages of data collection.

Interviews to elicit qualitative information can be linked effectively to other data generation methods. Phenomenologically-inspired interviews, like ethnographic interviews, can probe harder to reach information when anchored in directly observed experiences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Different interview settings can stimulate different responses and lead to the generation of different data. For instance, the discussion of photographs and videos can stimulate the generation of information that may not occur to research participants in a verbal interview (Pink, 2011). In this study the opportunity for discussion of coresearchers' own photographs and videos, together with activity monitoring data, is identified as a means of generating free-flowing discussion and valuable data. Visual images and activity data provide details relatively easy for coresearchers to recall and share, in comparison to discussion of abstract or simply remembered situations.

A child-guided participatory method of analysis is then needed which can systematically and transparently distil a potentially complex corpus of data, to provide rich descriptions of the coresearchers' experiences of physical activity.

4.6 Data Analysis Methods

Participatory data analysis has received less attention than other aspects of participatory research (Nind, 2011), which is true of research in children's physical activity. Arguably data analysis should be at the heart of participatory research; empowering children to construct knowledge of phenomena from their own view of the world; enhancing validity and insight into their world (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998); and providing more authentic understanding of their experiences (Grover, 2004). In this context data analysis is

conceptualised as 'a process of dialogue, seeking input and feedback rather than ...a task' (Nind, 2011) or separate mechanistic stage of research. It co-exists and threads through data collection as a collaborative reflexive process. In discussing and developing their data, coresearchers use existing skills of reflection to review the data they have collected, for instance for completeness. Coresearchers can sort data that is more important to them and identify patterns in the data, particularly if these processes are presented as simple tasks of identifying key headings to describe data collected, from which coresearchers can collaboratively prepare their 'story' of their free-choice pursuits. These are the processes involved in thematic analysis, providing a systematic approach to data analysis, which can involve coresearchers in reviewing and analysing their own data.

4.6.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis describes a family of flexible, ill-defined and sometimes contested data analysis methods (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The focus is upon exploring and describing themes in a corpus of data, by coding small 'chunks' of data and grouping codes into themes, which 'capture something of interest or importance in relation to your research questions' (Robson, 2011, p. 474). The precise nature of a thematic analysis approach depends upon the study aims and research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and can be shaped to the needs of the study. Thematic analysis lends itself to AChiG research, because the processes are accessible to coresearchers inexperienced in formal research processes, but capable of reviewing their data, comparing and contrasting what is more important and identifying patterns in their data. Thematic analysis can also deal with a range of different types of data including images, talk, field notes audio and video recordings; any of which coresearchers might select in data collection.

An initial step-by-step data analysis plan was prepared which could be revised and developed flexibly with coresearchers. In this study, Braun and Clarke's (Braun and Clarke, 2006) phases of thematic analysis were used as the basis of a data analysis plan, comprising the following steps: familiarisation with the data; generation of initial codes;

identifying, reviewing and finally defining and naming themes (See Appendix IV). Within this overall structure, key elements were included to encourage coresearchers to take a guiding role in the analysis.

Most importantly, I focused upon coresearchers leading an initial analysis, by sorting and grouping their data under key headings and sub-headings which were significant to them. I then planned to use the coresearchers' selected headings as deductive codes, so that I could simultaneously inductively and deductively code the coresearcher's data. This would then enable me to cross reference coding to give insight into inductively coded aspects of each coresearcher's data headings. In this way I would potentially develop

180205 MEM ANA Early reflection on data-extract

... initial feeling that co-researchers appeared to each strongly like time with parents in their free choice time and how this played out in different ways. Parental influence on the children's choice of activities, their apparent enjoyment in the activity appears strong across the sample albeit different in each case.

Could the relationship with parents; parental choices about how to spend family time; the influence that the co-researchers are allowed/given within the family; the context of the family (older or younger siblings to think about or not etc.) be the common thread? Early data familiarisation is suggesting that it is not simply about parents as role models.

Bronfenbrenner's socioecological layers of influence focusing upon the parental influence could provide a framework for understanding how children develop their physically active selves.

Reflexive thinking 10: Impact of parents on coresearchers' PA enjoyment and choices

inductively analysed insights into the meanings within coresearchers' headings and the data gathered under those headings. Other aspects of the planned participatory nature of the data analysis process are highlighted, which included:

- Reflexive discussions throughout data collection to develop a familiarity and a joint understanding of data with each coresearcher
- Guidance from coresearchers about data to be included under their headings for coding and that to be ignored for the purpose of preparing their story of their free-choice pursuits
- Use of coresearcher's headings to lead the writing up of descriptions of their free-choice pursuits, to reflect the meanings in the language that coresearchers themselves used.

Reflexive memos were used to record data analysis activities and to provide transparency about the unfolding analysis methodology guided by coresearchers. Transparency of the analysis process contributed to the quality of research, by making steps in analysis explicit, facilitating the replicability of the overall data analysis methodology (Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge, 2004) . The use of Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was able to support transparency and management of processing, organising and sorting large and multiple sources and types of visual, audio and textual data. However, there are both advantages and disadvantages in the use of IT software for qualitative data analysis (Robson, 2011).

4.6.2 Use of qualitative data analysis software

In addition to the benefits highlighted previously, the flexibility and speed of operating software can enable researchers to revise and review data/codes and themes very simply and swiftly. This can give researchers confidence to move ahead with initial analysis, and also subsequently increase researchers' willingness to be critical and creative about analysis decisions as the analysis progresses. Whilst it may be the case that software programs can impose particular approaches to data, the analysis tools provided by NVivo 10 for this study meets the needs of the analysis plan outlined in Appendix IV. It facilitates a detailed consideration and consistency of coding that would not be possible manually (Robson, 2011). Key aspects of each phase of analysis, in particular in relation to facilitating the coresearchers' guiding role in the research, are now considered.

4.6.3 Familiarisation with the data and data analysis methods

Familiarisation with the data, involves the researcher immersing themselves in reviewing that with which they are already familiar (observation field notes and interview audio recordings and transcriptions) as well as that which coresearchers prepare for the study (photos/videos etc.). This involves reading/reviewing and re-reading/re-reviewing, looking for overall patterns within each coresearcher's data. Facilitating coresearcher's participation in this early stage of analysis requires creative ways of making data visible to

share. This is a useful discipline and helps to avoid any temptation identified by Braun and Clarke (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to skimp attention at this stage. It also provides the researcher with a natural way to engage coresearchers in identifying and corroborating initial selection and interpretation of data with each coresearcher. Even this early stage of analysis involves interpretation, demonstrating powerfully that meanings are constructed, and that analysis is not just a case of coding and sorting data. Data is generated and importantly, taking an AChiG approach, generated in collaboration with coresearchers. This has important implications for the analysis of visual images and talk data.

Analysis of visual images – photographs and videos

Understanding the subjectivity of visual images is important and impacts upon the analysis of visual data. Three key aspects of photographs and videos presented by coresearchers need to be considered.

Firstly, the process by which the images are produced can vary. Sometimes

170815 MEM ANA *Selecting data for initial familiarisation stage for check and challenge with coresearchers*

Wanted to prepare an initial summary of the coresearchers' stories in order for the coresearchers to check and challenge my interpretations and understandings of the photos and videos they had collected. This would also specifically give me the opportunity to check my use of the "In the picture" (ItP) technique of interpreting *photos and videos by engaging the coresearchers in the reflective stage of the three stage ItP process (data collection using photographs which showed the focus of the child's gaze, transcribing the photo in the first person, reflection and reflectiveness upon the transcription/data)*. I felt that this needed to happen at the earliest opportunity within the study schedule as waiting for several months for all the data to be processed would make too great demands on the coresearchers' recall about the data.

coresearchers take photographs or videos themselves. At other times, coresearchers direct others, a parent or sibling, for instance, to take photographs and videos in which they frequently appear. The degree of engagement or stake-holding coresearchers have in the images might impact the relevance of the images to the coresearcher. The use of sophisticated CAQDAS software (discussed below) allows the researcher to differentiate between photos/videos prepared or directed by coresearchers and those in which they may have taken a more

Reflexive thinking 11: Checking my understanding of coresearchers' data

passive role in collecting.

Secondly, the content of images is important in identifying the reality that is made visible within the image. The context in which images are viewed and understood, for instance, reflect the socio-cultural context and personal situatedness of the image (Pink, 2007b).

Finally, concerns about the subjectivity of qualitative research methods flow throughout data analysis. In a reflexive approach to the analysis of visual images, the researcher must identify their own 'subjective feelings and assumptions that influence' (Pink, 2007b, p. 3) understandings of images and make these clear in the analysis. The preparation of face value descriptions of photographs and videos for subsequent coding can assist the researcher. This approach can help avoid interpretation too early in the analysis process and the potential for researchers' own preconceptions to enter into the analysis process. Nonetheless a reflexive attitude should continue throughout analysis of images and be supported by the use of reflexive memos.

Transcription of talk data

Transcription provides relatively easy access to interview and video talk data for coding purposes. Key to transcription within a thematic analysis is that a rigorous record is

170803 MEM ANA *The phenomenological gaze*

One of the first pieces of transcription - I hesitated at this point in the first person description of the picture because I wanted to go on to say something about Jay's apparent sense of excitement, pleasure, joy. Having spent time with Jay, I have a strong sense of his palpable excitement from his body language, facial gesture and smile in this photo. However, I fall short of actually saying this is the transcription of the photo as it feels too subjective and unsupported. I know from a three way conversation with Jay and his Mum about the school pantomime that he showed enthusiasm in volunteering to take a speaking role when the designated classmate withdrew.

At this point I discussed the reasonableness of making claims about Jay's apparent sense of excitement etc. with a fellow student. She shared advice she had been given from academic staff to remove the subjectivity of the researcher and rather than state that Jay is excited, fall on additional information stating what he and Mum had said about it.

Going forward I will carry out ItP style of transcription of photos and videos and cross reference with other data sources to support my beliefs about what the co-researcher is experiencing. This is going to be an ongoing challenge in data transcription and analysis. The development and presentation of my belief about what co-researchers experience is unlikely to come from straight forward statements or responses to questions involving the co-researchers. I will need to build a case for my beliefs from multiple layers of data in a multi-modal style of data analysis. This is likely to occur at both individual event level and multiple events over the course of the time I have spent with the co-researchers.

Reflexive thinking 12: Interpreting coresearcher data faithfully

retained of the information that is needed from the verbal account 'in a way which is 'true'

to its original nature' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is important that in keeping with the research questions, and participatory phenomenological approach to the study, the researcher captures not only what is said in videos, observations and interviews, but how

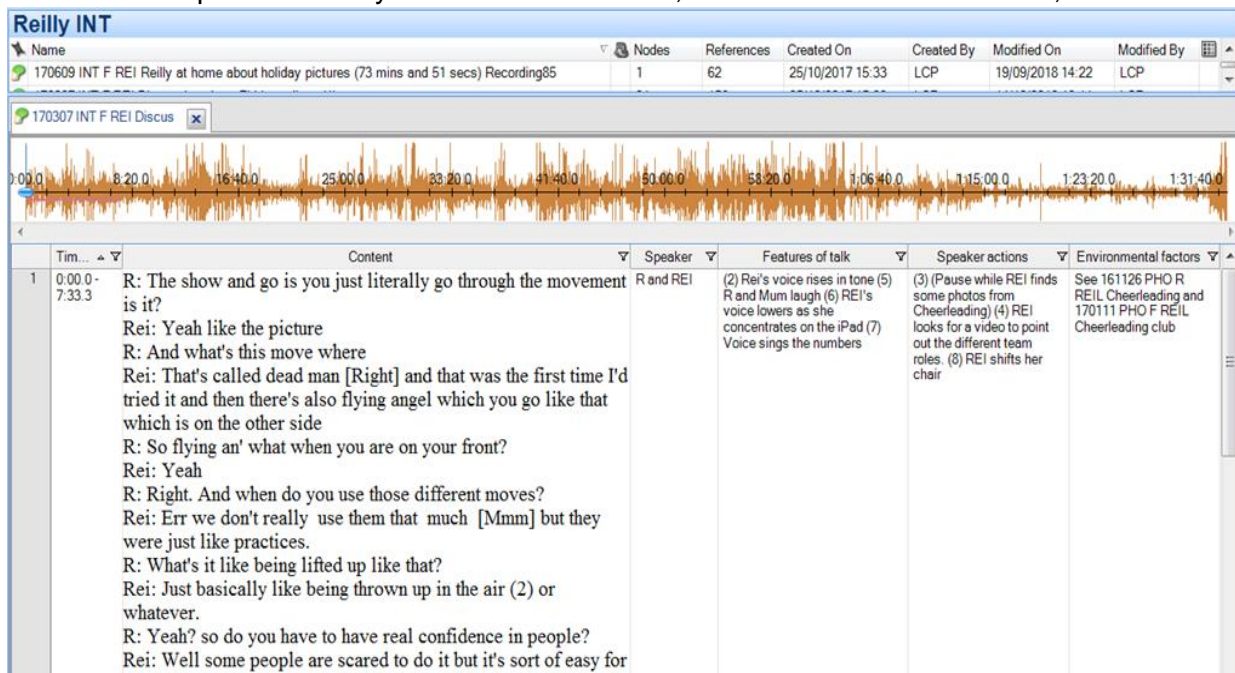


Figure 4: Screen print to demonstrate the transcription headings in NVivo for talk data

it is said. Intonation, body language and gesture can potentially contribute to interpretation of data and/or provide insight into coresearchers' embodied experiences being described or portrayed.

Use of Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) enables the researcher to analyse large amounts and varied types of data and provides high levels of flexibility. In this study transcription was undertaken in the NVivo 10 software, and headings were developed which helped structure and capture key information comprising: timespan within the data source to locate the talk in the file; the content of the talk; the speakers; features of talk; speaker actions; and environmental factors comprising external happenings and a catchall for relevant issues linked to the data being analysed. The use of CAQDAS software allows the researcher to undertake initial high level transcription, comprising descriptions of the talk interspersed with key sections of detailed transcription and key quotes. This allows the researcher to cover a lot of data quickly in the early familiarisation stages of analysis with coresearchers. The researcher can return to key sections of data to develop it in greater detail (170713 MEM ANA Initial transcription). The

software can also link transcripts of coresearchers' talk with their photographs and videos, layering and helping the interpretation of meaning in the data.

4.6.4 Generation of initial codes

Formal coding of data starts when the collaborative familiarisation stage of analysis with coresearchers has been completed. This assists in avoiding discussion of data with the coresearchers being influenced by the researcher's own examination of the data. Coding can take the form of inductive or deductive coding, the former being more open, whilst the latter makes use of pre-determined codes. On the one hand pre-determined codes may sensitise the researcher to key aspects of the research which would be otherwise overlooked, on the other pre-determined codes may support researcher bias and pre-conceived ideas (Robson, 2011).

Inductive descriptive coding is used at least initially in the AChiG model of participatory

170807 MEM ANA Delaying NVivo coding of coresearchers' data

When work planning, noted that I had fallen behind schedule with the preparation of the coresearchers' stories and that I had scheduled NVivo coding to begin. I decided against NVivo coding until after sharing stories of the coresearchers' free choice leisure pursuits with each of them. Felt that this would keep discussions with the coresearchers more open and avoid potential bias in conversations at this point. This would be an important meeting to address any gaps in the stories that I could see, clarify any misunderstandings as well as get feedback on the research process and discuss dissemination although the latter two points may be better delayed to another meeting. See 170817 MEM PRO Maintaining contact, check and challenge, and dissemination strategy with coresearchers.

I was initially concerned that I was influenced by being behind in my workplan schedule but then spotted an old scribbled note on my working copy of the workplan "Too early: Prep Thematic analysis schedule and discuss with Supervisor". Reassured I will re-schedule the NVivo coding to start after the meetings with the coresearchers.

Reflexive thinking 13: Suspending coding decisions - leaving coresearchers to guide process

research. Codes are generated from face value descriptions of visual data; from what coresearcher's say in discussion with the researcher and in what they say and do where coresearchers show their activities in videos or in person when they invite the researcher to observe their activities. In other words inductive coding emanates from the researcher's interaction with coresearchers' data (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006), foregrounding the coresearcher's voice in their data. This approach is highly compatible with the AChiG approach and the social constructivist perspective

underpinning the methodology. As outlined in Section 3.2, a social constructivist view of the world contends that there is no one single reality or truth that describes the world or phenomena in it. Coresearchers in this study will therefore construct a reality of physical activity from their interpretation of their social interactions and experiences with the phenomena.

A first set of ideas that are meaningful with regard to the coresearchers choices and experiences of their free-choice activities are formed by focusing upon and coding the smallest segments of raw data (Boyatzis, 1998). These codes reveal items of interest or importance and start to reflect the richness of each coresearcher's data. Codes can reflect aspects of the data's face content (known as the semantic level) or the data's latent level, that is the 'underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations that (were)

171218 MEM ANA Purpose of returning to co-researchers with initial overview of their story of leisure time pursuits.

See 171213 MEM ANA Ritchie, 2003 Qualitative Research Methods p 270 Re. validity and validation of data

The purpose of returning to co-researchers with an overview of their data is to:

- *Maintain and demonstrate commitment to the research relationship*
- *Engage co-researchers at an early stage in the data analysis process by primarily checking if there are any gaps in the co-researcher's data (RQ 1. What 7-11 year olds choose to do in their free choice time)*
- *Secondarily, where data is profiled, to highlight any reasons why they chose the activities profiled in the story (RQ 2. Why 7-11 year olds choose what they do) and what the experience of the activities are like (RQ3. What the participation in the activity, particularly chosen physical activities feels like)*
- *Discuss the process of data collection; strengths and weaknesses of collecting data this way and co-researchers' thoughts on the process*

Reflexive thinking 14: Focusing on coresearchers' interpretations of their data

shaping the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). These ideas are shared with each coresearcher to seek clarification and verification of aspects of the data generated through the coding process. Coresearchers are asked if they recognise themselves in the data. They guide the researcher to a deeper understanding of the data, potentially rejecting some notions whilst generating new insights before explanatory themes are sought in the data. This may involve several iterations, with the researcher returning to discuss patterns within each coresearcher's data.

4.6.5 Identification of themes, reviewing and preparing theme descriptors

Themes are prepared by identifying patterns in the coded data, grouping data which appear to be related. Researcher consistency and accuracy need to be maintained during coding. An ongoing reflexive approach supports consistency and accuracy, ensuring the researcher remains aware of the potential impact of her own preconceptions and beliefs. Early collaborative work with coresearchers during the familiarisation phase also helps to provide a template of the way that coresearchers themselves order their data. The preparation of themes from the data moves through several iterations, cycling between the codes and their descriptions, the data and back again. When most data are consistently coded and described, codes are gathered into themes with further cycling between theme descriptions, the codes and data each theme contains. CAQDAS software enables the researcher relatively simply to analyse relationships between different codes and themes, and also model data to provide pictorial representations of data that can illuminate and lead to greater insights. The objective of this stage of analysis is to prepare a set of coherent themes for each coresearcher which accommodated all that coresearcher's data. From these themes, rich descriptions are prepared of the phenomena being studied, bringing the essence of experiences to life using coresearcher's own words and images.

Identification of cross-coresearcher themes

In this study cross coresearcher analysis was undertaken for two key purposes. Firstly, the process of comparing and contrasting themes across coresearchers provided a further way to refine each coresearchers' individual themes (Boyatzis, 1998). This involved returning to the data to check and challenge coding and coding descriptors, if it appeared that similar data had been coded differently across coresearchers. Secondly this phase of analysis enabled the researcher to identify potentially transferable themes in the data, that might have broader significance than the study sample for further research.

The development of visual displays of cross coresearcher themes provided a means of describing and potentially identifying tentative explanations that underpin coresearchers' experiences as a research group (Boyatzis, 1998). Definition of themes helps reveal meanings in the data and potentially tentative explanations. Defining themes is a process of integration and interpretation. Themes and visualisations of thematic networks/maps are not the analysis itself, but the means by which meaning is generated (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2011). Defining themes is about identifying the 'essence' of each theme. Themes are more than a simple summary of what codes and data the themes contain, they describe specific parameters, characteristics and qualities of the data gathered. The researcher is seeking, with the coresearchers, to stand back from the detail of the data and see the overall story themes tell within themselves and in relation to others (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Coresearchers' guidance at this stage of the analysis, offering amendment or corroboration of both their individual and cross coresearcher themes, continues to foreground the coresearcher's voice during the analysis process.

The process of identifying, naming and defining themes involves many iterations, returning to the raw data to review and refine the scope and content of themes, how themes are named and defined. Simultaneously using an AChiG participatory research approach, individual preferences of coresearchers, external demands on coresearchers' time which may cause coresearchers to withdraw and re-engage with the research, are all factors which can impact a planned linear approach to data analysis.

4.6.6 Producing the report and reporting findings

Thematic analysis combined with an AChiG model of participatory research potentially gives rise to a variety of different reports, dependent on the intended purpose and audience. Coresearchers should have the opportunity to share their own reports as part of an overall dissemination strategy. Rich descriptions of coresearcher's free-choice time activities are a key outcome of phenomenological research using thematic analysis. Studies using thematic analysis can conclude at this point with rich descriptions of phenomena studied. However, the researcher is not only interested in the overview

question “How do 7 to 11 years old children experience physical activity”, but is also interested in identifying tentative explanations that could be the subject of further analysis from those rich descriptions set out in the sub-questions (see end Chapter 3)

4.7 Ethical considerations

The study’s methodology adopted the British Education Research Association ethics and legal guidelines and received a favourable opinion from the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). On embarking on this study, I held a current Disclosure and Barring Services certificate, which I made available for all parents, coresearchers and host venues, such as schools and community clubs that coresearchers invited me to visit. I made provision for the proper reporting of disclosure of harm had any coresearcher done so. This required particular attention since the researcher was working with coresearchers in their homes for much of the research, where institutional structures for reporting did not exist.

Providing an opportunity for the 7-11 year old coresearchers’ voices to be heard was at the heart of the ethical considerations of the study Clark (2004) and pervaded the design and implementation of research throughout. Smith (2002) suggests that: ‘there is a sense in which participatory research may be able to claim the ethical high ground by putting research subjects at the centre of the process, giving them a measure of control over what is investigated and how, and offering them a say in the dissemination and follow-up activity’ (2002, p. 199). However, this sort of assumption can lead to key issues being overlooked in practice. In this section I highlight key ethical considerations, particularly in relation to carrying out research with children, which have not naturally arisen in setting out the methodology or that deserve emphasis. I was mindful of the ethical impact of values I brought to the study and the potential harmful effect of value judgements (May, 2001). As part of my reflexive approach to the study, I respected coresearchers’ autonomy and integrity and was mindful of the potential impact that I may have upon coresearchers as an adult researcher (Alderson, 2014).

I strove to manage independent informed consent, free from deception, through the process of enrolment, which started with introductions to coresearchers via parent gatekeepers. Consent was sought from both parents and coresearchers using age appropriate consent forms and supporting information that coresearchers retained for reference. Copies of consent forms and information letters are contained in Appendix V and the quality of these were an important part of gaining coresearchers' trust and assent (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). In particular children's own combined information and consent forms were written to be understandable. I was aware that coresearchers might still be coerced into participation by enthusiastic parents (or prevented from participating) who might have their own agendas for their children's participation in the research (Kellett, 2005). This led me to give potential coresearchers time to reflect on the request for their support, and to discuss the proposition in private with parents. Permission to use visual images and the coresearchers' data was also sought towards the end of the data collection period. Coresearchers were more aware of what they were being asked to share and were equipped to provide informed consent. However, I could not guarantee that parents were not still influencing their decisions, nor that my own position as an adult researcher was not impacting the coresearcher and their decisions (Bushin, 2007). During research I remained alert to any signs of unwillingness to participate in research activities, and to reinforce their voluntary role and permission to withdraw without repercussion ensuring ongoing consent. I emphasised, for instance, that we had enrolled more coresearchers on our research team than was strictly required, so that coresearchers would understand that withdrawing would not spoil the study. I continuously built my relationship directly with coresearchers, sending updating emails, cards and newsletters (see Appendix VI) directly to them whilst alerting parents that I was doing so (Bushin, 2007).

I was mindful of the potentially considerable contribution of time and expertise that coresearchers were making to the study. It felt appropriate that coresearchers should be rewarded for investing their own time. I was also, however, mindful of the dangers of influencing research participants' contributions to research in the giving of rewards

(Bushin, 2007; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). I addressed this dilemma in two ways. Firstly, I identified ways of rewarding and recognising their work. I offered, with their permission to share their achievements with influential others such as their head teachers. A 'mini-graduation ceremony' was held at the end of data collection at the University, to receive a photo book of their work. We also celebrated our work in the Coresearcher's Newsletter. I offered to support coresearchers in exploiting the research experience to give them recognition for their work in other instances they might identify. In addition, I periodically gave modest gifts, the first a family cinema token at Christmas in the midst of data collection and then, towards the end of data collection, a coffee house token for 'hot chocolate' at half term. These were given as a thank you for coresearchers' hard work and as a way of celebrating the arrival of school holidays. The gifts were infrequent, so not establishing an expectation of 'payment', nor sufficient to create a sense of obligation. I was alert to but detected no alteration in the coresearchers' behaviours or opinions.

Minor issues to do with causing discomfort arose where coresearchers did not wish school friends to be aware of their participation in the research. I became aware of this when noticing a reticence from one coresearcher to invite me to after school clubs; and quickly steered discussion away from this observation opportunity so as not to cause alarm or embarrassment. This also sensitised me to the potential for other coresearchers to be similarly embarrassed. At the same time, I was conscious that I was often meeting with coresearchers in their own homes. This was their private space, not just their parents' home, and I was mindful that I behaved in a respectful way, asking where we would meet, where I should sit, and so on (Bushin, 2007).

Maintenance of privacy and confidentiality of personal information was formally regulated by the Open University. The study was registered with the Open University's Data Protection Officer and all data collected was stored securely in accordance with the Open University's data security guidelines. This included setting up dedicated secure electronic storage areas and the use of encrypted storage devices when in the field. The use of visual research methods needed to be considered in relation to data collection and

dissemination of research. Permission had to be formally collected for retaining and using coresearchers' own visual data, but also strategies had to be put into place to seek the permission for photographic/video data to be collected in group situations, also contained in Appendix V. Images do not speak for themselves (Russell, 2007), I had to recognise that others interpret visual images differently and that use of images and captioning needs to represent the meaning intended by the coresearcher. Specific permission to use images and text, suitably anonymised, was sought on each occasion that I wanted to use data in a wider domain. For instance, coresearchers shared some of their photographs in their Coresearcher Newsletter.

The act of recording reflexive thinking memos actively engaged me in a habit of reflection guided by the participatory research methodology. The majority of reflexive memos focused upon whether the researcher-coresearcher relationship was providing researcher agency and support to participate (e.g. Reflexive thinking 5) and whether there were any factors impacting coresearchers' agency to express their authentic views (e.g. Reflexive thinking 6) question one and four of the schematic to provide coresearcher agency).

Simultaneously the habit of a reflexive disposition sensitised and prepared me to respond to ethically important moments (McEvoy, Enright and MacPhail, 2017). For instance, I was alerted to Reilly's potential discomfort in my joining her Xtreme Camp day (see Reflexive thinking 7); to Danny's potential embarrassment about discussing his withdrawal from Football Academy training (see Section 5.4.4 Mastering skills and performance). In other words, the ethical conduct of research was embedded in an active reflexive approach rather than simply the maintenance of a pre-stated set of ethical standards.

Ethical considerations for the research, in particular recognising children's capabilities as coresearchers and the value of their insight into the lived experience of their worlds, were reflected throughout suggestions of research methods. This continues in the flexible approach to applying these methods and the nurturing of each coresearcher's highly individualised journeys through research processes. In this chapter I have set out data and analysis methods which characterise the AChiG approach, and in doing so, set out

the principles of methods which encourage coresearchers to take a guiding role in the conduct of participatory research. The next chapter, Chapter 5 Findings, documents each coresearcher's chosen pathway through our research.

5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I report findings of the collaborative thematic analysis of six of the nine coresearchers' data as set out in the previous chapter (Section 4.6). When I considered sampling and enrolment of coresearchers (Section 4.4.2) I aimed to generate a body of data from which rich descriptions of a breadth of coresearchers' experiences could be prepared. I anticipated that a convenience sample of nine coresearchers would be both manageable and accommodate up to three withdrawals from the study. Whilst coresearchers contributed to the study differently, none withdrew from the study. This presented me with a difficult choice between reporting the widest variety of experiences and achieving depth of descriptive detail within the constraints of the academic reporting word count for this thesis. I decided to focus upon six coresearchers' data as originally anticipated. The choice of coresearchers was based upon:

- Achievement of a balance in gender and age spread through the 7 to 11 years old age range
- Ensuring a balance across sport and non-sport occupations and interests of the coresearchers' parents and family
- Giving the greatest spread of family situations which led to focusing in two families on just one of two coresearcher siblings.

Coresearchers who have not been focused upon here are included in the discussion of findings where their experiences support or provide further variety to the discussion of findings. Their work is also fully included in the ongoing dissemination of the research and development of an anthology of the coresearchers' stories. Coresearchers generated a large corpus of data over the course of 9-12 months, which enabled data collection to take place across different seasons, holiday and school term times (see Table 4).

Table 4 The combined data generation activities of the nine coresearchers

	Discussions		Observations	Photographs	Videos
	Number	Duration (Minutes)			
Beach Girl (BG)	5	26	2	11	
BG & Jay *	2	34	4	172	46
Jay	4	13	2	7	1
Danny	7	197	3	310	56
Georgia	3	62	3	29	16
Geo & Gareth *	5	304		252	83
Gareth			2	13	6
Harry	5	103	4	32	14
Reilly	3	168	5	104	10
Vixen Swift	8	132	3	108	20
IA	4	246	4	29	7
Total No.	46	1285	32	1058	259
*Indicates that siblings jointly contributed some photographs and videos and/or shared discussions					

Bringing together participatory and phenomenological research approaches, guided by coresearchers I aimed to collaboratively prepare rich, credible and authentic descriptions of coresearchers' lived experiences of their free-choice pursuits. As set out in Section 4.6.1 each coresearcher guided the analysis of their data by creating key headings to describe what was important in their data. This unfolded using mind maps from the planning of data collection through collection and analysis. Each coresearcher went on to develop a rich narrative about their free-choice pursuits. Extracts from their stories are contained in the Appendices to illustrate the sources of data in coresearcher's own words, which help to describe the essence of the coresearchers lived experiences (Section 6.5).

I then go on to report the further inductive analysis I undertook of each set of data, under each of the coresearcher's descriptive headings, highlighting what was most important in their data. Reporting of key themes found within data gathered under coresearchers' headings is grounded in coresearchers' own words and experiences found in their raw data and completed stories of their free-choice pursuits. The chapter concludes with a

brief review of the similarities and differences found across coresearchers in themes underlying coresearcher's own analysis, before discussing findings in the next chapter.

5.2 Georgia's story

Georgia lived with her parents and coresearcher brother (Table 2) in a large village, on a quiet estate of modern houses with gardens situated a short walk from her school.

Georgia embraced the role of coresearcher with enthusiasm, for instance contributing to the Coresearchers' Newsletter (See Appendix VI), proactively preparing for discussions by selecting and organising her visual images into special folders (160912 INT F GEO 0:56.0-1:30.5). Georgia was confident, highly articulate and the most reflective of the coresearchers. She appeared to enjoy meeting to discuss and develop her data, fluently verbalising her thoughts and feelings associated with her pursuits. Georgia opted to prepare her own story, distilling what she liked to do in her free-choice time into a visual presentation. (See Appendix VII for extracts of Georgia's presentation).

5.2.1 Georgia's data collection and analysis activities

Georgia's data collection and analysis activities and outputs over a 12 month period are shown in Figure 5. Much of her data collection activity was a joint enterprise with her brother reflecting their joint pursuits, which she tended to lead; for instance, setting up the remote videoing of them trampolining together (170330 PHO FM GEOGAR IMG_0093).

She invited me to observe three of her activities comprising a horse-riding lesson, swimming lesson and drama club performance.

Georgia engaged her parents in our discussions, asking for clarification about aspects of activities. She also engaged her family, primarily her Mother, in collecting visual images of her in action during her activities. Georgia, however, remained in control of her data, orchestrating the visual images she wanted and being clear about those she chose to create her story. In the final stages of the data collection and analysis, she went so far as to identify generic images from the internet to illustrate her interests where she did not

have satisfactory images from her own sources e.g. netballing, and beach holiday screen grabs (See Appendix VII).

Research outputs/ <i>critical events</i>	Time line of data collection and analysis activities	
	Enrolled	Summer holidays started to collect visual images with iPads
	Data collection	160912 Discussion about first visual images collected
		161015 Shared horse riding lesson with researcher
		161115 Shared swimming lesson with researcher
		170110 Discussion of visual images collected over autumn and Christmas holidays
<i>Broken arm in a horse riding fall, hospitalised needed operation</i>		
Planning mind map to show current activities (See Appendix VIII)		170216 Discussion and activity mind mapping exercise to identify gaps in data
		170406 Discussion and review of data
Initial sorting of activities (See Appendix VIII)		170531 Discussion while starting collage mind maps to summarise data
		170713 Shared drama club showing with researcher
Completion and labelling of collage mind map from which to prepare a 'story' or description of free choice activities		170816 Discussion while completing final picture collage mind maps
	Data analysis	Last half of summer holidays GEO prepared a PowerPoint presentation depicting her free-choice activities
GEO's PowerPoint presentation of her free choice time activities. (See Appendix VII)		
		180412 Discussion key themes in GEO's presentation of her data.
Mind map of GEO's key times to describe data. (See Appendix VIII)		Review 180412 Feedback on the research experience

Figure 5: Georgia's timeline of data collection and analysis activities

5.2.2 Georgia's headings to describe her data

The development of Georgia's headings captured in mind maps, from planning data collection through collection and on to our reflective discussions to review and analyse her data are shown in (See Appendix VIII). Georgia continued to incorporate new data right up to the point of preparing her PowerPoint presentation about her free-time pursuits. This process lead to 8 initial headings ('Messing around'; 'Outdoor activities (Trampoline)'; 'Family and outings'; 'Playing with friends'; 'Organised sports'; 'Selfies'; 'Crazy and fun'; 'TV and reading' and 'Favourite things in past') each with sub-headings describing particular groups of data as shown on her labelled collage mind map (Appendix VIII). Discussion of her final presentation built upon some of these headings whilst consolidating others under broader headings. For instance, Georgia uses the headings

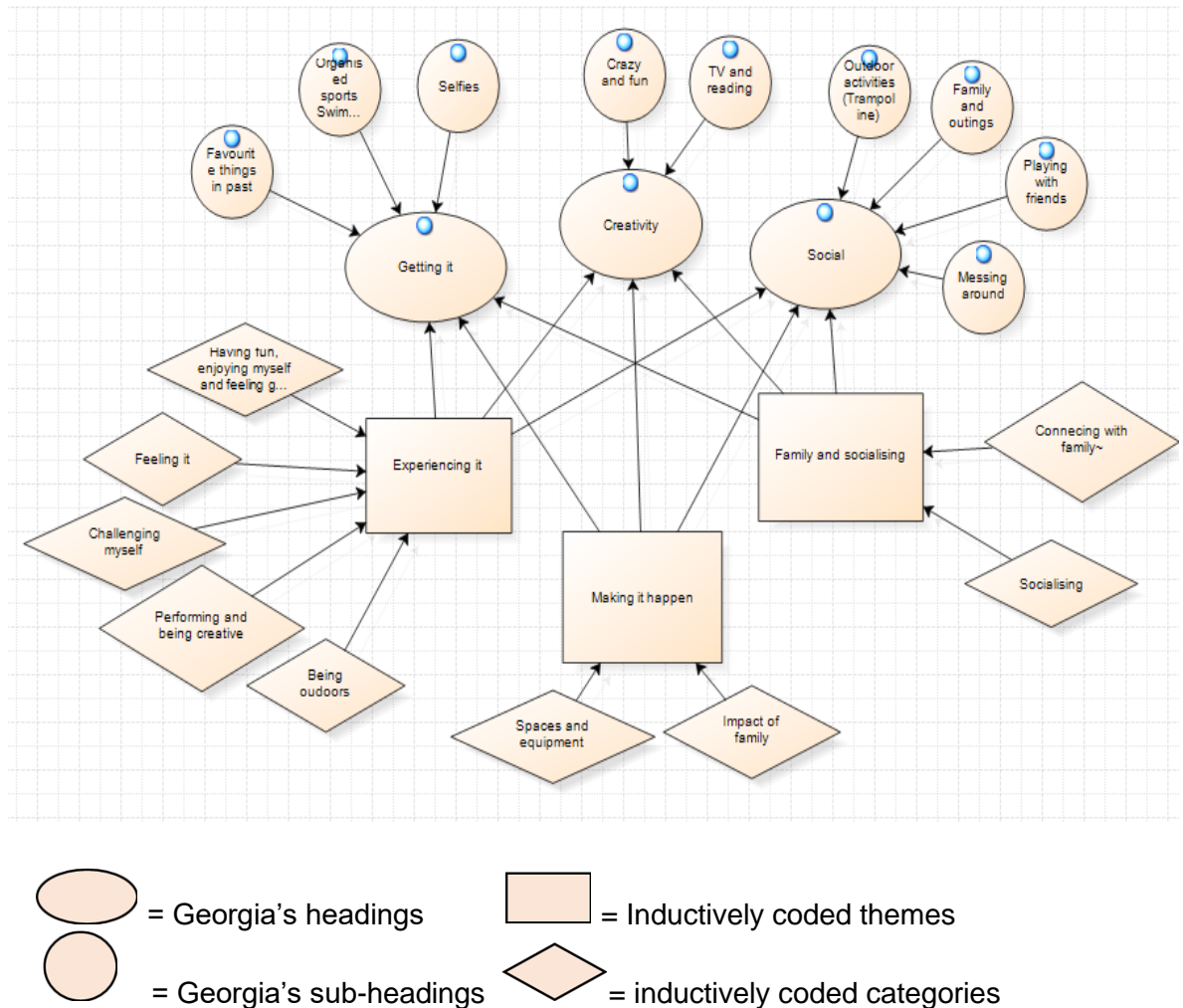
'Getting it' to describe both the organised sports she reviewed in her data as well as aspects of participation in those activities presented in her story. Similarly, she brought together early headings ('Selfies'; 'Crazy and fun' and 'TV and reading') and a new pursuit, "Drama" under a new heading 'Creativity'. For the purposes of linking Georgia's headings to my researcher-led inductive analysis of Georgia's chosen data, I used Georgia's title 'Social' to bring together her headings 'Social'; 'Outside and holidays'; 'Family'; and 'Friends'. This pragmatic action simplified the mapping of inductively coded data onto just three headings comprising: 'Social', 'Getting it' and 'Creativity' without loss of Georgia's own detailed description. These headings are encircled in red freehand in Table 5 and modelled using NVivo software to show headings and sub-headings in Appendix IX. Headings and sub-headings were used to simultaneously deductively code Georgia's data during the next stage of inductive analysis.

Table 5 Georgia's development of headings and sub-headings to describe her data

Georgia's data collection review		Georgia's final presentation	
Headings	Sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings
Messing around	New Year's Day	Social	Meals
Outdoor activities (Trampoline)	BBQ	Outside and holidays	Outings
	Bouncing		Walks
	Surfing		Beach
	Tallington		Surfing
Family and outings	Freddie	Family	Films
	Grandparents		Freddie
	Nana's Bazaar		Grandparents
	Punting		Chilling
	Summer 2017		Variety of things
Playing with friends	Messing around!	Friends	
	Hanging out with my friends		
Organised sports Swimming, Running, Netball, Cheerleading? Dance?		'Getting it'	Netball
Selfies		Creativity	Award for hard work (swim team)
Crazy and fun			Horse riding
TV and reading			Conquering the skill
	Book Day		Drama
Favourite things in past	Horse riding		
	Hospital		

5.2.3 Inductive coding of Georgia's chosen data

My inductive coding generated 155 codes describing aspects of Georgia's data, which I reviewed and revised to 96 codes, then modelled under nine sub-themes and three main themes as shown in Figure 8.



NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data and inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Figure 6 Georgia's headings and inductively coded themes

Using the matrix analysis functions in NVivo software, cross referencing inductive themes and sub-themes with Georgia's headings and sub-headings revealed information about:

- How Georgia experienced her creative pursuits ('Experiencing it') and how her creative pursuits were facilitated ('Making it happen')

- How Georgia's pursuits under her headings 'Getting it' and 'Social' were facilitated and impacted by her family and socialising together with the experience of those activities.

The resulting mapping of inductively coded themes onto Georgia's headings provided the framework for the detailed narrative of Georgia's free-choice pursuits which follows, using Georgia's own headings to structure her narrative.

5.2.4 Georgia's experiences of physical activity

"Crazy and fun": creativity in Georgia's chosen pursuits

Creativity was a recurring feature of Georgia's chosen pursuits. Georgia associated creativity with 'chilling out' and relaxing as well as with active pursuits. She also associated creativity with her love of reading and writing. Creative pursuits were strongly characterised by fun, enjoyment and feeling good; experienced in embodied ways in playful activities and in her drama club activities and performances.

Creativity in Georgia's pursuits first emerged in the creation and sharing of selfies, as a collaborative, fun and funny sibling activity, which also involved friends and family members. In excess of 60, psychedelic and distorted selfies in her data collection led to Georgia's assertion: "Selfies are amazing" (Appendix VIII). The activity appeared to be driven by intrinsic humour in the activity. Giggling, Georgia was keen to share a "really funny" selfie of her and her brother together having composed "a really weird face" (160912 INT F GEO 13:09.4-13:36.7). There was mutual teasing and competition to create the weirdest images. The siblings deployed well-practised skills on iPads and iPhones for extended periods of time, chilling together.

Simultaneously Georgia appeared proud of her creative skills, styling herself as "crazy and fun" in her friends' eyes (Appendix VIII). She spoke of having "quite (a) vivid imagination" linking creativity with her "quite good vocabulary" from reading, her love of writing about "monsters and aliens and guns and dragons" (14:43.1-15:12.0).

Georgia also made a literary connection with her love of being with horses through her favourite adventure novels, featuring a Palomino pony and young heroine whose name – Georgia - she adopted for the study (160912 INT F GEO 11:01.7-11:50.9). This literary connection to her love of being with horses continued beyond her accident when she gave up riding. Following her riding accident, however, Georgia reported: “drama has taken over my life like completely” (180412 INT GEOGAR FM 1:39.5-1:50.9). She described the positive feelings she experienced from acting, the opportunity to be creative and her sense of fulfilment when it has gone well:

“I just quite enjoy acting, being like in the limelight, being at the front of stage like. Being able to like play different characters when you do a perfect scene or when you just go up and have fun and you like have a really good time”. ... So, it’s like, I don’t know, it just makes you feel happy.” (170713 INT F GEO 7:14.4-7:41.2)

Georgia also highlighted fun and enjoyment in the creativity of trampolining: “What a great pose!” (Appendix VII). This creativity was physical, and performative using the whole body in flight to strike skilful, playful poses and appeared to be an extension of selfie activities. Much of Georgia’s trampolining was characterised by playfulness; free, whole body, high energy movement for its own sake, in the moment and designed to amuse an audience, most often her brother but also her girlfriends. Games she co-created with her brother sought exciting movement sensations, for instance a game timing simultaneous seat bounces with her sibling: “we seat drop and it flies us everywhere (laugh) (160912 INT F GEO First meeting. 3:38.2-3:56.9). Similarly, the siblings introduced excitement in the form of landing hazards in the shape of five footballs: “It’s like dodgeball but they fly up and all bounce in the middle” (160912 PHO GEO GAR FM Trampolining IMG 0204).

“Getting it” in Georgia’s chosen pursuits

For Georgia, ‘Getting it’ was about “Conquering the skill” (Appendix VIII), meeting challenges in activities and about an embodied experience of her chosen pursuits.

Underpinning many of her chosen pursuits, Georgia could be seen to be challenging herself:

- Through competitive team sports
- By learning to ride
- Tackling novel recreational water sports with family
- Mastering new moves on the garden trampoline
- Giving drama club performances

She experienced satisfaction and pride in mastering her horse-riding skills: "Look at my posture" (Appendix VII), "I think I've grown quite good [laughs]" (160912 INT G GEO 9:57.3-11.01.7). This was accompanied by her personal drive to improve. She was committed to practicing and working hard at an activity. Her mantra for creating a successful scene in drama: "practise and practise and practise" (170713 INT F GEO 7:14.4-7:41.2). Whilst she described how the fun she found in riding and her freedom to choose to ride balanced the effort required:

"It is hard wooorrk. ... but I find it quite fun because it's something I like to focus on and it helps me because I like to make my riding better. ... it's something you like to do so it's not like school where they force you to do it" (Ibid 9.14.1-9.57.4) (Georgia's emphasis).

Multiple factors impacted Georgia's enjoyment in mastering her activities. Her relationship with swimming for instance was complex. An essential recreational ingredient in enjoying holidays, Georgia was also required by parents to have lessons to achieve a level of proficiency to be safe participating in water sports. Georgia had achieved the required proficiency quickly and then wanted to give up classes. She was persuaded to continue until her brother also reached proficiency. A new teacher had contributed to making further classes enjoyable, allowing Georgia to set herself new swimming challenges. Georgia then profiled being part of her school winning swim team as part of her final story, which she labelled as "Award/reward for hard work" (Appendix VII). Her reflection on why

she enjoyed being part of the school swimming team focused upon the recognition of her abilities and her commitment to the team and its success:

“I think I enjoyed that because I had been chosen for this opportunity to represent my school ... and I'd contributed to the fact that we've won. ... So I'd played a part in the fact that we'd won. ... yeah it was like I actually got asked, that means I am good and like it's not just me thinking I'm good, it's I actually am. And I we worked as a team together and it's that goal”. (180412 INT GEOGAR FM Final meeting 39:28.8-40:09)

This experience was echoed when Georgia stepped up a year group to play netball for her school team which needed players. Georgia didn't associate herself with some of the team's disappointment in defeat (170713 INT F GEO: 3:23.8-3:50.0). Instead, she highlighted the enjoyment of being part of the team.

For Georgia enjoyment came from teamwork; the team signals and celebration routines and the intrinsic experience of being physically active: “Netball is really fun because you can run around and it is really energetic”. (See Appendix VIII).

Georgia suggested that she could be competitive, for instance citing her willingness to challenge boys in school who ridiculed the girl's netballing skills (170713 INT F GEO: 40.09.8-40.49.0). She also revealed moments of competitiveness with her brother, but simultaneously surprised herself when she recalled getting caught up in the moment in her swimming race: “I was like literally getting angry 'cos just like I wasn't in front of them and trying to do it” [Laughing voice] (Ibid: 40.09.8-40.49.0). However, generally winning as part of her chosen pursuits remained generally unimportant within her overall data.

The challenges that Georgia set herself called upon personal reserves of courage and resilience. She revealed how “scary” riding could be (160912 INT F GEO 7:44.1 – 8:07.5), the need to “stay confident” if the horse stumbled and not to make the horse nervous (161115 OBS FM GEOGAR). Simultaneously she describes her initial reticence to join in a family surf boarding outing and finally how glad she was that she did it:

“...It wasn't really me that was like: "Yeah let's do this"... because obviously, it was cold, it was October ... but when I was there. I didn't wanna do it, I didn't wanna do it. But then ...Yes, I'm so glad I did it". (180412 INT GEOGAR FM 34:25.6-35:27.0 and Appendix VII)

She compared herself to her brother:

“...He's more up for things than me. He's more daring than me. ... Like I will think about how dangerous this possibly is. ... Like I would think what if I hit my head?” (Ibid: 36:54.2 - 38:48.1)

170815 MEM ANA The fragility of the coresearchers' activity choices - extracts

I was reminded when transcribing the conversation with Georgia about her horse riding before her accident, how fragile the coresearchers' experiences of their physical activities can be. The conversation then was in stark contrast to conversations I had had latterly when she had declared that she still liked horses but did not like to ride them and would probably not go back to horse riding in the foreseeable future. Both Georgia and Vixen Swift had used the word 'scarey' about their horse riding experiences. Neither was this fragile balance between fear and enjoyment confined to the girls and horse riding. I was then reminded of Gareth's discomfort about his experience of playing football for the professional club Academy which he did not enjoy because of the attitude and strictness of the coaches. He had given the Academy football up. Mum had indicated that whilst she was very supportive of this decision, Dad was more minded that this was a positive experience for Gareth. This situation was exactly mirrored for Danny who was very committed to his football but after only a couple of sessions at the same Academy was expressing less enthusiasm and finding it very 'different' from his community football experience.

Her riding accident and a fear of injury impacted Georgia very strongly, causing her to give up riding. This revealed her deep connectedness with the ponies she rode which remained: “I, I do miss being around the horses and the care of them” (180412 INT GEOGAR F 26:08.5-26:37.8). Caring for the horses was the thing Georgia had always liked best about the riding (161015 OBS F GEO Horse riding lesson hack) and until her accident appeared to outweigh the scariness of riding. Horse riding had provided her with her own space: “It is really like my little paradise where I can go and get away from my brother” (160912 INT F GEO: 9:57.3-11:01.7). That personal space and connection with her pony was also

Reflexive thinking 15: Changing nature of coresearchers' experiences

associated with being outdoors. Georgia empathises strongly with the ponies, the fact that they don't like the rain, that they need to be exercised but: “sometimes it's nice for them to be in the shade and have a breeze and sometimes it's nice for them to have a change

from being cantered” and schooled in the training ring, going out on a hack instead which is “kind of relaxing for them”. (160912 INT F GEO 7:11.9-9:14.2). Georgia described in detail, the tranquillity of warm, summertime hacks around the edge of the fields through gates “under loads of branches” and through “a really nice woodland” into the adjoining ‘Meadows’, where she and her fellow riders “walk(ed) through ... and have a bit of a laugh and stuff” (160912 INT F GEO: 8:07.4 – 8:46.4).

The social in Georgia’s pursuits

A wide variety of both active and inactive pursuits were gathered by Georgia under her headings: ‘Social’, ‘Outside and holidays’, ‘Family’ and ‘Friends’. Georgia highlighted the opportunity free-time pursuits offered for connecting with family, through shared activity experiences characterised by humour and teasing. Those activities were often in the outdoors, associated with family holidays or special outings, which were times and spaces for novel experiences and new pursuits framed frequently as treats and part of family celebrations.

Family pursuits included socialising with extended family, particularly grandparents and a much loved infant cousin. Participating in family activities was an integral part of family life, during which Georgia established her identity as older sister and cousin leading activities. She delighted in playing with her toddler cousin, for instance in a ball park in her final story (See Appendix VII). Georgia described her family as quite active. Mother, Father and Grandfather acted as strong role models for participating in physical activity through playing, coaching and supporting netball and rugby respectively. Georgia’s interest in “running with Mum” (see Appendix VIII) was as a means to build fitness for netballing and to join her Mother in the community netball club when she was old enough.

Family outings and holidays were times Georgia particularly enjoyed. These were characterised by opportunities for novel pursuits, including adventurous outdoor water activities, as well as to relax as a family, for instance dressing up smartly to eat out (see Appendix VII). The draw of being with family, in combination with enjoying the outdoors

and trying a novel activity, helped Georgia overcome reticence about the discomfort of some. Georgia described layers of influences acting upon her interest in these activities as illustrated in her presentation slide: TALLINGTON WATER SPORTS: WE GO TO TALLINGTON AND DO SOME WATERSPORTS, IT'S SO AWESOME!! (Appendix VII):

"I'm not really sure how to describe it like I think just being outside like sometimes it's really nice to be outside and when you're with your family it makes you happy and like it was quite a fun activity. I'd never tried it before." (180412 INT GEOGAR FM: 35:27.0-36:54.2)

Notwithstanding the strong appeal of connecting with family, Georgia could not be persuaded to join fun village family cricket sessions. She eloquently argued the pointlessness of joining because of her lack of cricketing competence. The presence of a wider audience overshadowed the enjoyment of being active with her family and foregrounded her need for a sense of proficiency and mastery of the activity before participating with others.

Whilst spending time with her family featured strongly in her free-choice pursuits, Georgia appeared to only incidentally associate time with friends with her structured physical activities of horse riding, drama club and netball. However, socialising with her school friends was an important part of her ten-pin bowling birthday celebration and sleepover, which occurred just as she was preparing her final story. She and her girlfriends channelled high levels of excitement into garden trampolining and performing for selfies (170331 PHO F GEO IMG 0123) whilst everyone gathered for the party.

In summary Georgia approached her free-choice pursuits with playful intent, bringing fun and enjoyment and imagination to her activities. She was highly motivated by personal challenges and was committed to hard work and practice to reap the rewards of mastering new skills and performing well. Rewards for her were often intrinsic in the activity itself, in simply taking part and doing well either for a team or in achieving a particular personal state of contentment, which was often associated with the outdoors. Connecting and being active with her family characterised many of her activities. Participation in her

chosen pursuits also enabled her to enact her identity positions as a family member, older sibling and confident, courageous partaker in a variety of creative and adventurous physical activities.

5.3 Jay's story

Jay was the youngest of the coresearchers. He and his elder coresearcher sister Beach Girl, lived with their Mother and Father and all but one of their adult siblings in a modest estate house in a quiet cul de sac, which backed onto his school and a large expanse of public green space.

Jay showed little interest in taking visual images of his pursuits. He mostly delegated the task of taking photographs and videos to his Mother allowing him to demonstrate his activities. He opted for me to prepare a draft of his story about his pursuits from his data for him to then critique. Jay provided a comprehensive and more rigorous critique of his draft story than any other coresearcher. The results of that critiquing are shown in the extract of his story in Appendix XII. He swiftly, rejected several pursuits I had identified in his visual images as never or no longer of interest, whilst strongly developing and connecting others. In doing so he took ownership of his data revealing clear characteristics of his choice of pursuits.

5.3.1 Jay's data collection and analysis activities

Research outputs and <i>critical events</i>		Time line and data collection and analysis activities (Not to scale)	
Preparation of initial data collection planning mind map (See Appendix X)	Enrolled	160914 Engagement meeting	
		161026 Collection of photos and videos started	
	Data collection	161125 Discussion of data collected and sharing of home-based activities	
		Continued data collection	
Reviewed collage mind map summarising data collection to date (See Appendix X)		Data analysis	170215 Discussion of data collected and sharing of home-based activities
			170304 Shared 'Splash and Floats' swimming session
			170523 Shared football skills
Mind map of Jay's key headings to describe data (See Appendix X)			180413 Data analysis meeting to review the draft story of Jay's free-choice pursuits
		Review	180413 review research process

Figure 7 Jay's timeline of data collection and analysis

Figure 7 shows the sequence of Jay's data collection and analysis activities. Jay's data was collected over 8 months from September 2016 to April 2017. Jay was enthusiastic about discussing his images and invited me to observe his favourite activities at home as well as joining him and his sister BG on a recreational swimming outing.

Table 6 shows how Jay's headings to describe his pursuits developed from planning data collection through collection, analysis and then the identification of headings to summarise and describe what was important in his data. There were some consistent headings comprising visiting parks and playgrounds, watching TV, and computer gaming throughout. Other activities (shown in red in Table 6) were present in the images in his summary collage mind map (see Appendix X), but were dismissed by Jay during the drafting of his story about his chosen pursuits (see Appendix XII). Pursuits dismissed from his final story included participation in drama/play acting and a range of home-based activities, together with swimming lessons. Simultaneously Jay progressively reinforced the importance of other aspects of his data; notably "IMPORTANT Parkour" and "Computer Games" featured in his final headings (shown in blue). This revealed that for

Jay 'Playgrounds', 'Climbing' and 'Flips' were all aspects of his practice towards taking up Parkour in the future. Jay's final headings to describe his data are shown circled in blue.

Appendix XI shows an NVivo modelling of Jay's headings and sub-headings describing his data. This highlights Jay's key interest in Parkour which brought together the activities

Table 6 Jay's development of headings and sub-headings to describe his data

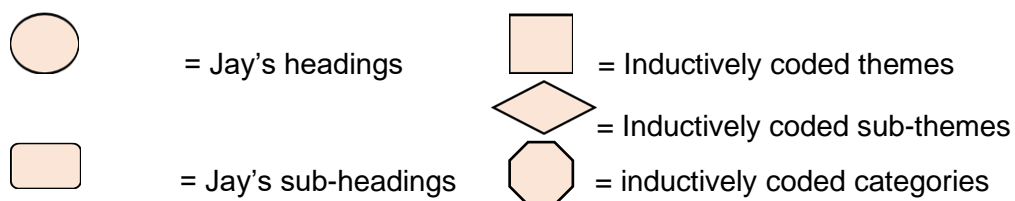
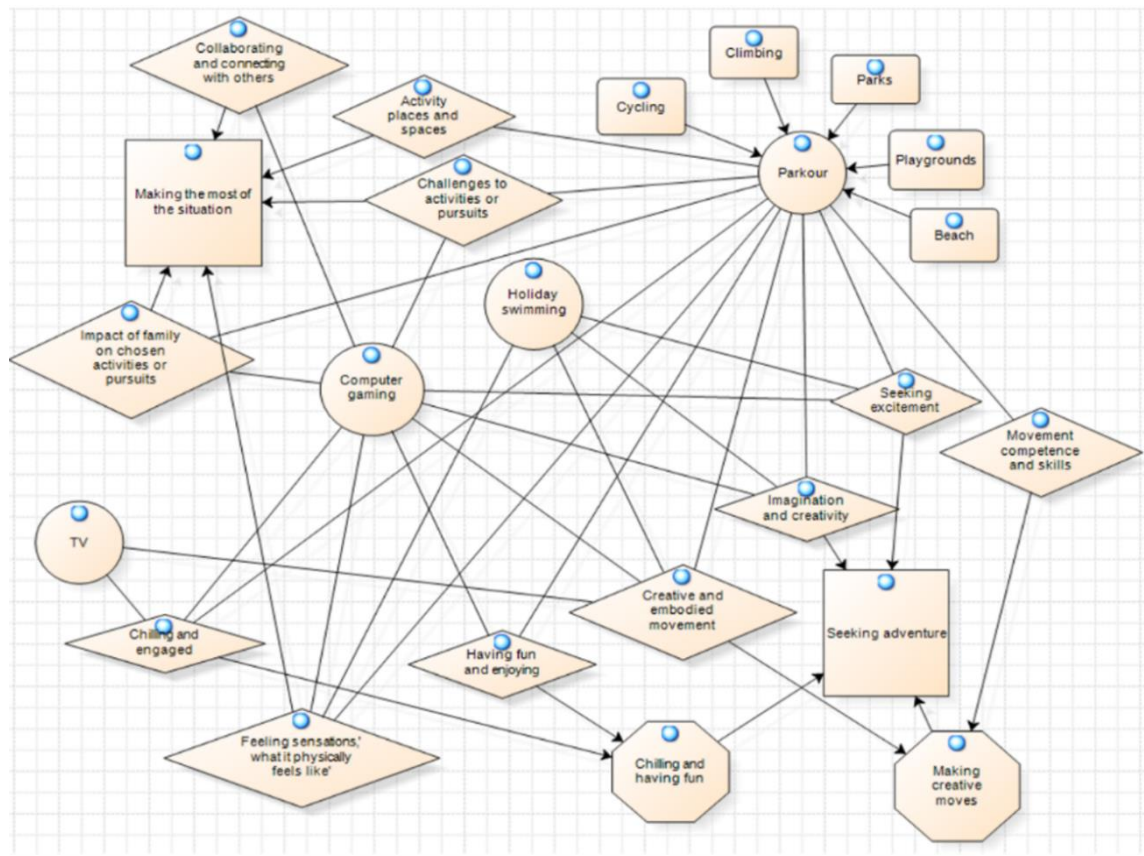
Data collection planning (See Annex X)	End of data collection (See Annex: X)		Final story (See Annex XII)	
Headings / sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings
Computer games: Out the back room Upstairs PS2 + Xbox Kev's Room X Box 360°	Computer games		Computer games	"Lego Undercover"
TV - Living room	Watching TV		Watching TV	
	"My favourite things for doing"	Swimming		
		Football		Badminton
		Climbing		
	Drama and play acting	Christmas		
		Halloween		
		Easter		
	Home activities	Helping with chores		
		Playing with electric cars		
		Baking		
		Gardening		
		Playing with pop gun		
			Holiday swimming = FUN	GTA Swimming
			Playgrounds	
	Playgrounds and parks		IMPORTANT Parkour -	Climbing
				Flips
			Parks	
	Cycling		Cycling	Scooter Bunny-hop
	Holidays and outings	Beaches; • Building • Rock pooling	Beach	Jumping from roof to roof
		Steam trains		Yorkshire campsite Draw stuff

and settings Jay associated with practicing creative parkour movements such as climbing, jumping and flips. These comprised: visits to Playgrounds with large equipment, Parks and Beaches together with the specific experience of scootering and cycling which he was

still mastering. Whilst rejecting swimming classes, 'Holiday Swimming' was linked to Parkour through his made-up swimming stroke fashioned on his 'Grand Theft Auto' computer game. Simultaneously many of the moves he practiced echoed the flips and climbing of other game characters and YouTube Parkour viewing. Jay retained TV watching as an important pursuit throughout the study but provided little data to support this activity. Similarly, having shared some very skilled and well-practised football tricks with me, Jay indicated that football tricks had diminished in importance in the final preparation of his story. Cross-referencing Jay's own headings with themes from detailed inductive analysis revealed further insights from his data underlying his chosen pursuits.

5.3.2 Inductive coding of Jay's chosen data

Figure 8 shows inductively coded themes mapped to Jay's headings to describe his data. Two strong themes were generated from Jay's data describing his activities; 'Seeking adventure' and 'Making the most of situations'. 'Seeking adventure' described the high levels of creativity, imagination and excitement in his chosen activities, connected with his love of computer gaming and physically expressed in playing out computer games adventures. This embodied physicality was described by Jay as "IMPORTANT Parkour." He enjoyed watching Parkour on social media. 'Seeking adventure' also encapsulated Jay's more relaxed pursuits when 'Chilling and having fun' and the imaginative physicality of his activities when 'Making creative moves'. The second theme 'Making the most of situations' appears at first to contradict the free-flowing energy of 'Seeking adventure'. However, 'Making the most of situations' was also associated with imagination and creativity in the way Jay consistently identified opportunities in his settings to pursue



NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data and inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Figure 8 Jay's headings and inductively coded themes

activities. 'Making the most of situations', revealed how Jay manipulated the agency and resources he had available to him to pursue his chosen activities. It also identified some limitations in Jay's comfort zone in participating in physical activity. This forms the framework to describe Jay's experiences of physical activity.

5.3.3 Jay's experiences of physical activity

Parkour as adventure seeking: "I like getting up high, I like having fun" (180413 INT M JAY 1:09:03.2-1:09:39.0).

Jay described Parkour as his “favourite” activity, highlighting his love of climbing within his all-encompassing definition of Parkour illustrated in Table 6, showing five activities as sub-headings (‘Cycling’, ‘Climbing’, ‘Parks’, ‘Playgrounds’, ‘Beach’) contributing to his Parkour pursuits. Adventure seeking was closely associated with Jay’s voracious imagination and quest to seek excitement in his activities. This was demonstrated both in his choice of activities and the embodied way he talked about them:

Jay: I like getting up high. I like having fun. 'Cos I like, I don't really know how to explain it. (Laughing) 'cos like I don't know how to understand it. *[in his delight and confusion, he breaks down into laughter⁴]* (1)

Researcher: What does it feel like when you are up high?

Jay: Gooooood (2) because I love climbing, because you like go up stuff and you like climb over stuff and it's part of Parkour *[Jay recovers from his giggles and puts emphasis onto his reply ‘I love’ and ‘Good’.]*

(180413 INT M JAY 1:09:03.2-1:09:39.0)

Excitement came from different sources each complemented by high levels of imagination and creativity:

- Self-imposed challenges, sometimes stand-alone moves to navigate climbing equipment and sometimes within games in which he role played the moves of his computer gaming characters.
- The physicality and movement sensations of activities themselves. For instance, Jay looked forward to riding the water park flumes on holiday (see Appendix XII).
- A sense of jeopardy either in the movements themselves, like the flume ride; or in an embodied sense within imagined scenes of Grand Theft Auto in which Jay situated his activities.

⁴ Transcription notes where relevant are provided in square brackets

Jay moved seamlessly from discussing actual physical experiences to the imaginary. For instance, Jay demonstrated his Parkour “hippy jump” and then explained that: “There’s a hippy jump for skateboards” and seamlessly transported us from the reality of practicing a particular move over the settee, into another of his computer games: “When you have a car you have a skateboard under it and you either flip over it or jump over it” (180413 INT M JAY 11:30.2-1:11:57.4). Similarly, Jay’s GTA (Grand Theft Auto) swimming saw him emulating his computer character using a

swimming stroke he had made-up to escape the chasing police (170304 OBS). On other occasions Jay’s imagination acted more directly on the experience of his activity. His reason for liking climbing was that he liked to climb up high and: “because I like t’ climb trees and get coconuts down and everything” (170523 INT M JAY).

Jay and his sister made the most of opportunities to visit playgrounds, begging their parents to stop at one whenever they were on an outing. Jay consistently challenged himself by climbing through playground equipment in ways for which it wasn’t designed; for instance, facing forwards rather than backwards to abseil down a drawbridge (161024 PHO FM JAYBG). The best thing about Jay’s favourite playground was “the unusual places that you can climb”, places people “don’t expect you to climb” (180413 INT M JAY 1:31:52.4 - 1:36:01.7). He had an embodied sense of movement through playground equipment:

“I love doing that ... you have to breathe in to get your body through like where I went through the climbing bars” (IMG_2078 and 180413 INT M JAY 1:26:55.6-1:27:49.5)

170528 MEM ANA Casual review of JAY’s mindmap and realisation -extract
Effectively, in response to the request to think of all the things they did at home in their free-choice time, Jay responded almost exclusively about computer gaming.

This may have been influenced by the fact that I had asked whilst he was playing Minecraft. However other factors in my experience with them at home supported the apparent importance of computer gaming to him. For Jay, participating in the Minecraft games was almost like vicarious physical activity. He would identify with the character he was manipulating with running commentary and noises accompanying the play. [Listen to recordings]. ... It was almost as if Jay’s world expanded when he played beyond his actual fairly cramped environment. He frequently chose to play computer games rather than play out in the garden.

Reflexive thinking 16: Seeing beyond the obvious - vicarious physical activity

190324 MEM ANA M JAY Analysis of inductive themes in Jay's data and coding what is there not what my instincts think should be there.

I have twice proposed a heading 'fulfilling family expectations; and am now removing it for the second and final time to stop further indecision by this memo. Instinctively I find myself wanting to portray countryside walks as something that Jay did reluctantly and joined in because he had little agency to do anything else but join his family aged 7 years. However, looking at his data there is evidence to suggest that he actively enjoyed going to parks. Whereas Playgrounds are "really boring": "In the open fields, yeah, I love doing it (being outdoors) then it makes me a challenge to get out and get my wellingtons on (INT M JAY First data analysis meeting 1:30:13.5-1:31:46.7)

Reflexive thinking 17: Coding what is there in Jay's data

I had initially to confront personal challenges in coding Jay's outdoor activities. Jay's highly creative and energetic approach to his physical activity pursuits highly connected to computer games instinctively made me expect country walks to be boring for him. However, Jay found excitement in country walks in the "challenge of getting his wellingtons on" (180413 INT M JAY 1:30:13.5-1:31:46.7); the excitement of potentially losing his boots in thick mud or floods. He enjoyed videos of himself wading precariously through water lapping the top of his boots, aided and abetted

by his Father. Further videos showed Jay squeezing through gaps in sheep fencing or repeatedly navigating deep muddy ruts sucking at his boots and getting stuck (170204 F BG IMG_0223, IMG_022, and IMG_0219).

Country walks were also a time Jay's imagination was fully active importing another of his computer games to engage his Grandfather:

"... we could play lava monster because it's like a game where you like so you can't touch the floor because it's all lava ... but if it touches you, you're a lava monster stuff." (180413 INT M JAY 1:24:54.8 - 1:25:20.1).

Alongside an embodied experience of exciting self-imposed movement challenges and creative games, Jay's engagement with Parkour was associated with achieving competence and mastering skills.

Parkour mastering moves: "I wanna do a flip"

Jay showed great commitment to practising, mastering and gaining competence in moves he associated with Parkour. Jay's interest in mastering "bunny hops" on his scooter and

“hippy jumps” over obstacles was about a sense of personal pride in achievement.

Practice and mastery were associated with the concentration with which he focused upon breaking down his moves in meticulous detail. He often dwelt upon the precise placement of the hand or foot to perfect a move (180413 INT M JAY 1:12:40.3 - 1:13:12.9) using furniture to demonstrate and explain.

On these occasions Jay appeared to be inwardly focused upon mastery of the movement and its detailed execution. A range of visual images in Jay’s data showed him mastering balancing and climbing feats. For instance, pictures showing him “gate climbing” (170523 OBS M JAY) and finely balanced and at full stretch, side-stepping along a suspended single chain bridge (161024 PHO M JAY IMG_0173). Jay was self-critical and ambitious to extend his Parkour skills. It was with some frustration he related his experience of repeatedly falling whilst learning to cycle on grass (170523 OBS M JAY 6:14.1-6:25.2). On another occasion he expressed his wish:

“I just wanna do a flip like not on trampolines or soft stuff like but on just do it on normal stuff like if I was on this floor and did that [demonstration] and just landed”.
(180413 INT M JAY 1:31:52.4 - 1:36:01.7).

However, mastery of formal sports skills to participate in structured sport did not hold the same interest for Jay. For instance, he gave up swimming lessons whilst continuing his love of Grand Theft Auto swimming:

“I don’t practise swimming anymore. ... I left at green and I didn’t want to go into blue in the next stages. The only swims I now is doing the GTA swim” *[Jay is reduced to giggles at the thought of GTA swimming]* (180413 INT M JAY 1:06:28.7-1:07:37.1).

Simultaneously, although he proudly demonstrated his skills in a range of football tricks and described in detail how to trick players with his football skills, he actually described playing football or rugby as hazardous and about “being jumped on”. Unless it was an

opportunity to spend time with his Father or adult brother, who had taught him football tricks, Jay had no interest in playing football even recreationally with his peers.

Parkour as time for chilling and belly-diving a leaf pile

Practising Parkour was also associated with a more contemplative affective state encapsulated in 'Chilling and engaged' and 'Having fun and enjoying'. He was relaxed in his activity, moving easily and fully master of his movements, still driven by imaginary scenarios he constructed around activities. On these occasions Jay had time to stop and take in his environment. Jay showed himself at the beach scrambling onto and jumping from rock to rock (161024 PHO J IMG_0100) or rather as he explained it "jumping roof to roof" (Appendix XII). He would stop to investigate the rock pools and play in the sand constructing castles and moats. Pictures showed him pausing and staring out from the top of playground equipment (161024 PHO M JAY IMG_0170) or being distracted halfway through climbing to notice something in the trees (170204 M JAY IMG_0237). Another video showed Jay running off on his own, shuffling through autumn leaves, and then belly diving into a heap of leaves before turning to laugh with his Mother and sister in the sheer exuberance of the moment (161024 VID M JAY IMG_0174). His surroundings provided opportunity for fun and relaxation, retaining a strongly embodied engagement with his environment.

Making the most of space and time for activity

Jay's physical activity pursuits were all in informal unstructured activity settings, often in the outdoors on outings with his parents. Jay's home and garden did not provide large spaces for physical activity. Whilst Jay's home bordered an area of public recreation ground, there was rarely adult supervision available to make this space accessible to him. However, Jay adapted his activities to the spaces available and used his imagination to augment experiences. Hence lounge room furniture became practice obstacles for parkour moves and a stack of fencing became Jay's climbing challenge (170523 OBS M JAY Climbing the fence IMG_1164). There was neither the space nor anyone with whom

to play one-on-one football in the garden, but Jay learned trick shots and set himself challenges within the space available: "... do you want to see how high I can kick this ball?" and delighted in exaggerating his achievements.

Jay's parents and adult siblings encouraged his imaginative play, not only at home but on regular country walks and beach holidays. Whilst Jay expressed a preference for rocky beaches for Parkour jumping practice (161024 PHO FM JAYBG IMG_0108) the beach was also where Jay could draw things in the sand (Appendix X), construct sandcastles and water-filled moats. At the water's edge he engaged with his Father and tossed stones into the sea. These activities captured Jay in a "chilling out" frame of mind. He threw stones into the sea using either hand. There was no sense of him challenging himself. It was simply a motion of throwing each pebble and watching the repercussion of it landing in the sea.

In spite of a wide range of different playgrounds in Jay's data, he preferred parks over playgrounds: "parks have obstacles and stuff" and playgrounds were "boring" (180413 INT M JAY 1:30:13.5 - 1:31:46.7). Parks had flood water to wade through; muddy farm ruts to get stuck in; lakes for throwing wood into and ducks for feeding; trees for hide and seek; mole hills to stand on to escape "lava monsters." Both Jay's parents encouraged Jay's enthusiasm for venturing into water and muddy places. His Father initiated wading through deep flooding encouraging Jay in more adventures in his musings:

"Come on then hold my hand if you want to come through" [Father turns towards J&BG and holds out his hand to connect with J. J is looking at his feet in the water over his ankles in his wellingtons. Slightly stooped forward, J's sister BG follows behind J. Jay tentatively puts his left foot forwards into the edge of the puddle to follow in with his Father.

"... That'd be, that'd be a nice bit of frozen to skate on. ... It's like paddling in a creek isn't it?" [Father to Jay]

(170204 F BG IMG 0222 0:03.08-1:09.9)

Jay's Mother joined Jay and his sister in their "splash and floats session", encouraging their self-directed play, joining in but rarely suggesting what they should do or trying to change the focus of the activity from fun to improving their formal swimming skills (170304 OBS FM BGJAY Splash and floats)

Within this environment of high levels of agency and parental support Jay occasionally revealed some boundaries to his ability to manipulate his environment to find enjoyment. He did not like getting cold, which led him to give up swimming lessons whilst by contrast labelling holiday swimming in a hot climate "=FUN" (Appendix XII). He also referred to playing at his football tricks in the garden "when it was hot" (170523 INT M JAY) although he was often pictured enjoying his outdoor activities in cold, inclement weather (161024 PHO FM JAYBG IMG 0108).

Jay was also mindful of the potential for hurting himself, particularly in organised sports. For instance, he highlighted the need to use a lighter football for heading practice:

"That one the hard ball you really have to learn. The easier balls you don't have to learn that much. Because them balls they actually hurt your head". (170523 OBS M JAY 4:45.8-5:00.3)

Jay dwelt on his adult brother's bruises from being slide tackled playing football. Also in football "you have to like run super-fast" which he didn't like. Jay's experiences of rugby in school PE led him to believe that playing rugby matches you would "probably get hurt and (laughs) everybody jumps on you" (180413 INT M 1:04:51.9-1:06:28.2). He expressed a preference for badminton rather than tennis because being hit by the shuttlecock wouldn't hurt whilst a tennis ball "if it hit you quite it will actually hurt" (180413 INT M 1:03:57.2-1:04:57.0).

Physical activity in Jay's free-choice pursuits was characterised by:

- Unstructured outdoor family walks, outings and holiday activities
- Imaginative manipulation of spaces and engagement of family members in creative games

- Media and computer inspired adventure seeking
- Embodied, creative movement challenges
- Reticence to participate in structured, particularly team-based activities with peers.

5.4 Danny's story

Danny was 10 years old in Year 5 of his junior school when he started to collect data. He was the oldest of three brothers and oldest coresearcher. His family lived in a suburb of a city in a large house with a garden, which provided Danny and his siblings ample space for active play with groups of friends and cousins. Danny engaged his parents and wider family to gather photos and videos of him doing his activities. He also engaged a parent in most of our discussions, in which we generated and later analysed his data. Danny chose to create his own final story using 'Our Story' presentation software to describe his chosen pursuits (See Appendix XIIIc Danny's story).

5.4.1 Danny's data collection and analysis activities

Danny collected his data between March and November 2017 from a range of sources, including inviting me to five activities comprising his Bhangra dance class, a home practice of a Bhangra performance piece with his brothers, a tag rugby match, a community football match, and a football holiday camp Figure 9.

Danny's data collection and analysis journey comprising his initial data collection planning mind map, his collage mind map summarising the data he collected, an extract from the slides in his final story and mind mapping of key headings describing his story, is found in Appendix XIII.

Research outputs and <i>critical events</i>		Schedule of data collection and analysis activities (schematic not to scale)	
	Enrolled	170305 Meeting to discuss the research	
	Data collection	170305 Shared Punjabi dance lesson	
Mind map to brain storm and think of all current activities (See Appendix XIIIa)		170316 Initial mind mapping of Danny's activities (see Appendix XIIIa)	
		170317 Shared tag rugby tournament	
		170318 Invitation to visit football match	
		170413 Review and discussion about photo and video data collected to date	
		170422 Shared holiday football camp	
Initial collage mind map to sort activities (See Appendix XIIIb)		170519 Meeting to discuss further data collection and start to collate data for final story	
		170904 Final photos and video data collected and compiled. Danny decided to create his story in "Our Story" software.	
DAN's "Our Story" presentation of his free choice time activities (See Appendix XIIIc)		Data analysis	171113 Danny completed and shared his final story
Mind map of DAN's headings and sub-headings to describe data in the final story. (See Appendix XIIId)			180405 Discussion of themes in Danny's presentation of his data. (See Appendix XIIId)
		Review	180405 Discussion of research processes

Figure 9: Danny's timeline for data collection and analysis

5.4.2 Danny's key headings that describe his data

Table 7 shows how Danny's headings to describe his data developed during data collection and analysis. Headings primarily emerged from our joint review of his final story, shown in blue. We collaboratively prepared a mind map (Appendix XIII) as we discussed features of his story (180405 INT M DAN). Danny's headings developed from simple descriptions of activities to more reflexive headings, which revealed more about his lived experiences and motivations for participating in activities.

Organised school sport, Football and Bhangra dance were examples of early headings describing what he liked to do, shown in Table 7, circled and labelled in red during data collection. These remained important feeding into Danny's sub-headings 'Variety of sports' and 'Skills – "Trying to make me better"' (180405 INT M DAN 20:13.3-22:45). Those sub-headings then generated Danny's first main heading 'Developing and practising skills,' labelled and circled in blue in Table 7.

Table 7 Danny's development of headings and sub-headings to describe his data

Initial data planning		End of data collection/Final story			
Headings	Sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings	Sub-Headings	Headings
School sport	Sports Leader training			Variety of sports	Developing and practicing skills
	Tag rugby				
	Swimming				
	Indoor athletics				
Football	School football training & matches	Football	Punjabi football	Skills "Trying to make me better"	
	Training Roman Rangers (Dad) and matches		Skills practice at home		
	Rhinos (football)		Holiday courses		
			Academy training		
Bhangra (Indian dance)		Bhangra	Performances public and family	Computer games – FIFA & WWE	
			Practice		
Family/home based physical activities	Daily plant either 1min or 30 secs We record it on our calendar'				
	Sunday run				
		Family and Gurdwara events	Family wedding	Friends	Gurdwara
			Worshipping and meeting friends	Family	
			Friends and family eating out	Outings	
		Friends and family outings and celebrations	Playing with younger brothers and cousins		
			Walks and parks		
			Footgolf		
		Family holiday activities	Mini-golf		
			Canoeing		
			Paddle boarding		
			Water polo		
Extended learning	Kumon				
	Children's University				
	Punjabi language class				

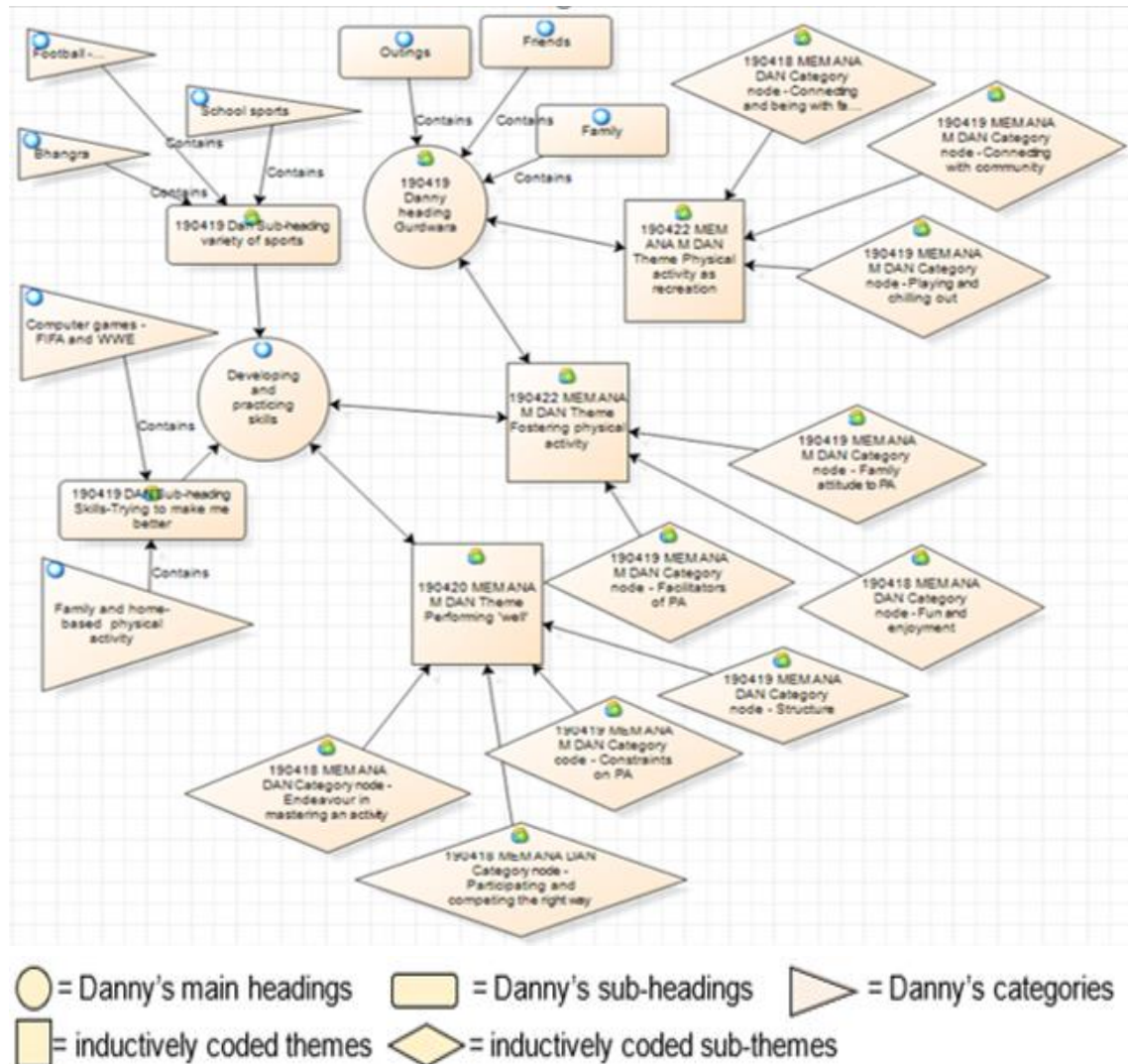
In the later stages of data collection Danny highlighted the importance of activity with family and friends often associated with celebration, outings and holidays, also labelled and hatched in red in Table 7. Three sub-headings 'Friends', 'Family'; and 'Outings' were generated to describe this data. Danny then brought forward the overall heading 'Gurdwara' (his Sikh place of assembly and worship) saying: "I think it links with all of

these three” (180405 INT M DAN 4:18.1.6-52:02.7). In so doing, Danny highlighted the importance of family and friends in his free time activities, strongly associated with his Sikh cultural community.

5.4.3 Inductive coding of Danny’s chosen data

Inductive coding of Danny’s chosen data showcased in his presentation “What I like to do in my free time” generated 126 inductive codes. As shown in Figure 10 these were reviewed and modelled into ten sub-themes, which generated three overall themes ‘Physical activity as recreation’, ‘Factors shaping physical activity’ and ‘Performing well’. The mapping of inductively analysed themes in Danny’s data, onto his own headings to describe his data about his free-choice pursuits, provides a framework for his narrative about how he experienced physical activity.

5.4.4 Danny's experiences of physical activity



NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data and inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Figure 10 Danny's headings and inductively coded themes

Mastering skills and performance – 'Performing well'

Football and Bhangra dance dominated Danny's physical activity choices. He belonged to four different football teams and attended football club academy holiday camps. He was always willing to try new activities, such as fencing, and took part in numerous extra-curricular school sports. He believed this diversity of activities assisted him to improve his football, through the development of core physical competences for instance stamina, strength and balance.

Danny was particularly interested in mastering football skills (180405 INT M DAN 37:04.8-37:28.7). Informal practice took place with family members in the garden; for instance, penalty shooting and a “cross bar challenge” which he described as “practice but fun too”. He also practiced alone on specialist training apparatus in his garden to improve fine “control and touch” skills (180405 INT M DAN 20:13.3:22:45.0). Danny enjoyed this self-motivated practice but was equally committed to team skills practice.

Danny used his new Apple watch to monitor his daily steps perceiving a link to increased football fitness; getting “obsessed” pacing about the house to beat his highest score (170413 INT M DAN 11.29.0-13:17.3). Danny and his brothers had a routine of strengthening exercises each night encouraged by their Father, who was also their football coach, to improve core strength. Danny teased that this was to “get a six pack” although self-deprecatingly laughed and said that he did not think he had “achieved even one yet” displaying the fun and humour which always underpinned his enthusiasm to improve (170904 INT M DAN 13:39.5-15:01.6). Danny framed all other activities in relation to enhancing his football:

- Holiday paddle boarding (balance) (170528 PHO IMG_0305-0318)
- Recreational foot-golf (accuracy) (180405 INT M DAN 34:35.1-35:09.9), and
- Bhangra dance (stamina) (170314 INT M DAN 43:59.8-46:44.3)
- Fencing (I) “heard it help(ed) with agility and stuff like that” (180405 INT M DAN 40:25.5-41:05.2).
- FIFA computer game (learning footballing skills) (180405 INT M DAN 121:49.0-15:12.7).

Danny described himself as “quite competitive” and consistently mentioned “Trying to be as good as I can be” (180405 INT M DAN 37:04.8-37:28.7). This appeared to be about fulfilling his Father’s wish for the team to play “good football.” Good football was encapsulated in a coaching mantra of “5 P’s” which primarily emphasised “playing with a smile”. For Danny, enjoyment stemmed from working as hard as possible and being skilled to perform optimally for the team:

“... we play as a team, we don’t really think of having like one main player who we always want to pass to, we all pass to each other, we spread out. ... and in training, ...we all get along quite well we always talk to each other.” (170314 INT M 58:48.6-1:01:13.6)

Danny’s analytical and team approach to his competitive football was apparent in his post-game assessment of the highlights, which were about his “assists” and “setting up” a team mate to score his hat-trick (170318 OBS M DAN 4:27.6-5:06.2). He appreciated everyone’s contribution demonstrated in his comforting words to a teammate upset by not having scored: “you contributed so much else” (OBS 170317 M DAN).

‘Playing with a smile’, for him, was also about playing with humility, fairness and good values towards the opposition, particularly not getting provoked by an opposition who did not play to the same set of values (170318 OBS M DAN 0:50.7-0:59.9). Danny stated that he never complained about the score in a game, how the team played was more important. With a rueful smile Danny recalled both his team’s excitement and loss of humility in over-exuberant celebration:

“I’ll never forget our first win and we won four-one and we celebrated, I had to go to the other team and apologise because we’d won. ... It was like we’d won the World Cup.” (170314 INT M DAN 58:48.6-1:01:13.6)

Whilst Danny’s commitment to playing “good football” remained consistent, his experiences of playing with different teams and situations varied. For instance, he saw his newly formed Punjabi team as different to his community team. Although they would play in a league against other Temples, the competition was less serious and there was more room for instance for: “joking around and having fun” (170904 INT M DAN: 8.35-5:54.0).

Meanwhile Danny’s aspiration to continuously improve as a footballer led him to two contrasting experiences of club academy football. In his holiday academy camp, he enjoyed the structure of the training and the encouraging, collaborative coaching style which complemented the fun focus of the sessions (170413 OBS M DAN). However,

Danny found training as part of a trial period with a second professional football academy very different: “much more serious and much more fast, faster tempo, faster pace, which is good, but I don’t want to do it now” (170904 INT M DAN 7:19.8-8:35.3). His reason for attending a trial period and his subsequent decision not to continue:

“Well half of it was trying to make me a better footballer and not lose my confidence. It was, it was fun, but I think I just didn’t want to do it because I found some of it boring” (170904 INT M DAN 5:53.9-7:19.8)

More revealing Danny acknowledged his mother’s comment that the club appeared to be “looking for a certain type of player” (170904 INT M DAN 7:19.8-8:35.3) which neither of her sons appeared to quite fit. Meanwhile Danny’s Father alluded to the coaching style being deliberately demanding, and coaches more critical than the nurturing style that Danny was used to in his community club, to test the player’s commitment. Whilst Danny did not refer directly to the coaching style, he did highlight knowing the coaches well as a positive feature of his academy holiday scheme which he continued to attend (180405 INT M DAN 25:12.0-26:30.1). In the trial period Danny had not known any of his fellow players; and he felt this led to not being passed the ball in practices. Danny referred to a lack of structure about sessions. Danny liked playing where he understood how he could progress. His favoured academy had “this pyramid you go from ... first level if you play well you can go up to advanced level” (180405 INT M DAN 25:12.0-26:30.1).

Danny’s experience of mastering Bhangra dance was characterised by many of the same features of his football participation. He enjoyed how physically demanding it was to perform:

..“you feel like it’s going really, really long, like really long” and your muscles are “aching” (180405 INT M DAN 9:31.0-12:12.5).

Characteristically, Danny worked hard to learn new dance routines for public and family performances. Routines were complex and difficult to learn, requiring structured, dedicated practice:

...” you learn it over a period of time, and you take little bits and then more little bits and you add it all together and you put it together like that” (180405 INT M 3:15.6-3:35.6).

He and his brothers practised at home, videoing their rehearsals to send to their teacher so that she could see what needed working on before an imminent performance (170413 VID M DAN IMG_0211). Classes and informal rehearsal were both accompanied by much laughter and excitement. Going through his mind while dancing is remembering the next move: “You’ve got to be ahead of time” (180405 INT M DAN First themes 3:15.6-3:35.6). Mirrors on all sides of their practice studio helped: “because ... sometimes it can look weird if you don’t keep your formation” (180405 INT M DAN 9:31.0-12:12.5).

There was fun and humour in practising and performing, with parents spectating noisily making a party atmosphere of the children’s classes. Danny’s Father for instance teased his sons by inventing a dance move called “milking the cow” and suggesting it was a recognised move which Danny adopted to great amusement in a class improvisation task. Humour, fun and laughter were a feature of his participation across his activities:

“Yeah that happens with like swimming let’s say I’m doing backstroke or something like that I just start laughing ... It’s something that just happens” (180405 INT M DAN 3:35.6-4.11.5).

Danny liked his dance teacher a lot: “She’s really fun” (170904 INT M DAN). Throughout practice she drove the boys hard leading with high energy, demonstrating and delivering loud instructions over the high tempo music. She also worked collaboratively with the class, for instance asking them to work in pairs to create new sections of routines.

Factors shaping Danny’s physical activity

Danny was surrounded by enthusiasm for sport and physical activity, which was embedded in his daily family life. His brothers provided a constant source of willing and motivated practice partners. Danny’s Father was highly aspirational for his sons, for instance encouraging them to give public Bhangra performances and preparing them to

try out for football academy teams. He was also an enthusiastic qualified FA coach and manager of two of Danny's football teams; and highly instrumental in embedding the values Danny prized in competitive football and performing Bhangra. Equally, his Father's nurturing coaching style contrasted to the more competitive critical approach of the academy Danny left.

Danny's Father's knowledge and understanding of football coaching led to the provision of a broad range of resources. For example, the large family garden accommodated equipment for football skills practice, and their spacious home provided space to practice Bhangra routines and exercise with his siblings. The family had the financial resources to enable Danny to attend clubs and coaching camps.

Danny's only limitation upon his ambitions to do more physical activity was lack of time. His weekly term-time schedule included at least one, and up to three voluntary extra-curricular sports activities a day. This was complemented by extra-curricular academic studies which Danny's Mother encouraged, comprising Children's University and Punjabi classes (See Appendix XIII).

Notwithstanding the intensity and commitment Danny showed towards 'practising and developing skills', his participation was primarily characterised by fun and enjoyment which came from a range of sources:

- An intrinsic sense of achievement from playing "good football" and performing Bhangra routines well. This involved mastery of skills which rewarded the hard work and endeavour involved
- Connecting with other like-minded players/performers, coaches and instructors; working as a team to support one another and participating within an agreed set of values
- Off pitch/stage socialising with teammates and coaches expressed in humour and teasing, and fun rough and tumble, which provided a sense of belonging in the release of tension

- The physicality of playing and movement itself, the lived experience of aching muscles, the relief of re-energising and reviving after performing and playing.

Gurdwara as, space and time for enjoyable family and community recreation

The Gurdwara was a place, space and time where Danny met with others in his Sikh community. He liked to “sneak off to see what’s on the top floor” of the temple, “play hide and seek” and “dares” (170519 INT DAN 6:13.1-7:49.8). His parents were instrumental in creating the temple football team for the Punjabi league; and the family joined a wide range of temple celebrations, often contributing a Bhangra performance to proceedings. Danny described attending temple as “respectful and also (it’s) quite nice because you’ve got friends there as well, it’s quite peaceful” (180405 INT M DAN 27:33.0-30:12.0). Danny explained the Sikh commitment to charity that was articulated through the preparation and donation of food from the temple for any visitor in need. The values that Danny espoused in “playing good football” appeared to be situated in this cultural commitment to humility, fairness and sharing.

The Gurdwara also represented family time for Danny. Whilst this does not entirely align with the normal use and actions associated with this term, it was significant for him in labelling mixed age group family gatherings. In summary, Danny’s experience of physical activity was dominated by:

- The mastery of his chosen activities particularly football and Bhangra
- Connecting with his family and cultural community through a rich variety of structured and unstructured activities.
- Different sources of fun and enjoyment from participation.

5.5 Harry’s story

Harry lived with his 13 year old sister and parents close to the centre of a small town and a short walk from school, in a house with a generous garden to accommodate a range of active games and pursuits with friends. He was actively supported by both his parents,

particularly his Mother whom he engaged to take photos and videos and whom he involved in discussions about his activities.

5.5.1 Harry's data collection and analysis activities

Research outputs and <i>critical events</i>	Time line and data collection and analysis activities (Not to scale)	
<i>Harry suffered an ankle injury and had been on crutches for three weeks just prior to starting data collection</i> Researcher field note of the activities Harry initially identified and planned to collect data	Enrolled	161012 Initial meeting to discuss the research
		161012 Discussion of early photos collected in readiness for the research
	Data collection	161103 After school meeting to discuss half term holiday photos
		161103 Invited researcher to Brazilian soccer session
		161126 Invited researcher to Town community football match
		161126 Post match discussion and 'sports interview'
		170131 Meeting to discuss data collected
		170313 Invited researcher to football academy
Critiqued draft collage mind map and Harry's mind map of data headings for analysis (See Annex XV)	Data analysis	170618 Invited researcher to trampoline club
		170618 Review of researcher prepared draft collage mind map of data

Figure 11 Harry's timeline for data collection and analysis

Figure 11 shows Harry's data collection and analysis activities which took place during an 8 month period from October 2016. As part of our data generation activities Harry invited me to observe three football related activities and a trampoline club session. Harry's headings to describe his data were developed from a photo collage I drafted for him and a final mind map he prepared during his critiquing of the collage (see Appendix XVI).

5.5.2 Harry's key headings to describe his data

Harry identified eleven sub-headings to describe his data, comprising three different football activities (town football team; garden football and Academy football); two different

trampolining activities (Trampoline club and garden trampolining) and five varied activities which were home-based and recreational in character (Pillow battles, Prank-off sister, playing out, WWE and playing drums). The gathering of these sub-headings is shown circled in red in Table 8. For the purpose of further analysis, using Harry's own references for the activities, I chose three main headings to describe each group of sub-headings. The three resulting main headings are shown in blue in Table 8 comprising 'Practicing and playing competitive sport/football'; 'Getting the moves' and 'Playing and having fun'. These headings were used to structure the narrative about Harry's physical activity experiences and are shown in Appendix XVII as an NVivo modelling.

Harry had a clear interest in competitive football which grew stronger during the study when he secured a trial place to train with his local Professional Football Academy. At the very end of data collection Harry had also been selected to represent his school in a future athletics meeting, and this is shown as a dashed red arrow in Table 8 linking the activity to his competitive football interest.

Table 8 Harry's development of headings and sub-headings to describe his data

Activities identified in data planning discussion	Data headings generated during collection	Harry's selected data sub-headings	Harry's data headings
Football training and matches for town community team	Football training and matches for town community team	Football training and matches for town community team	Practicing and playing competitive sport/football
Football party	Football party		
Garden football with friend	Garden football with friends	Garden football with friends	
	Academy SET football	Academy SET football	
	Brazilian football		
		Athletics	
	Swimming		
	Parkour moves		Getting the moves
	Trampolining	Trampolining	
Garden trampoline - play fighting with friend - bouncing and playing ball	Garden trampoline	Garden trampoline	
	Pillow battles with Dad	Pillow battles with Dad	
Water balloon fights	Bottle flipping		Playing and having fun
	Playing at home with friends - pranking sister	Prank off my sister	
	Creating friends club with T-shirts		
	Playing out with friends	Playing out with friends	
		WWE	
Guitar playing			
		Playing drums	
	Outings and family activities - Legoland with rides - Stately home and grounds - Trick and treating - Sister's birthday family lunch - Holiday activities in NZ with extended family		

Harry also showed a sustained interest in trampolining and this activity also developed significantly during the study. At the start, Harry aspired to taking up Parkour, inspired by watching Parkour on YouTube. He connected Parkour tricks with practising moves for fun on his garden trampoline daily in all weathers. This progressed to joining a trampoline club, where Harry's interest in mastering different moves styled more as Parkour tricks progressed to the mastery of moves styled formally by the sport of trampolining.

Finally, Harry's innate energy and sense of fun gave rise to a range of home and garden based active play – notably 'Pranking my sister' which I described for Harry with the heading 'Playing and having fun'. This left some data which Harry purposefully did not

people' and 'Experiencing and seeking fun and enjoyment'), each describing distinct characteristics of his physical activity choices and experiences. A fifth theme described the factors impacting his choices and experiences (Time, place and spaces impacting physical activity). A cross matrix analysis of inductively generated themes with Harry's headings to describe his data showed strong associations across all themes and headings. However, mapping sub-themes with Harry's headings as shown in Figure 14 revealed differences in the physical activity experiences underpinning the different headings describing his free-choice activities.

5.5.4 Harry's experiences of physical activity

Practising and playing competitive football as an aspiration to perform well and progress

"Football is definitely a favourite" (161103 INT M HAR 20:10.6-23:06.9) and was an all-pervading interest as both a recreational and competitive pursuit. Football and football-related activities, such as foot golf, provided opportunities for bonding with friends.

Football was part of informal play and associated with socialising and close friends comprising:

- Regular football play dates
- Drills and skills practice in the garden
- Fun skills challenges such as the "cross-bar challenge" (161103 INT M HAR 19:02.8-20:10.6).
- The invention of a new club complete with club T-shirts

Early during data collection Harry attended Brazilian Soccer sessions. These were highly structured, high energy sessions encouraged by loud upbeat music, which demanded concentration and hard work. The sessions were led by energetic, highly professional and encouraging coaches. There was a sense of the participants joining 'a movement'; guidelines for behaviours were strongly established and participants appeared ready and

eager to comply to be a part of the movement; listening attentively to the coaches and springing to positions when directed. All the participants wore the Soccer School's strip including the coaches, who positioned themselves as role models for the skills and behaviours they were coaching. Harry liked Brazilian Soccer "because you learn different skills and it's just like it's really fun" (161103 INT M HAR 15:31.0-16:42.1). He particularly enjoyed applying skills in a full game context after drills practice. He expressed that enjoyment in a concentrated immersion in the session rather than an outpouring of excitement.

Harry played for his town team with the same intensity that he participated in Brazilian Soccer. He focused hard, following the game, showing little emotion, rarely for instance calling for the ball or celebrating good play (161126 OBS M HAR).

Harry was competitive. He described with pride how his town football team would regularly reach finals and semi-finals of local tournaments, sometimes beyond his expectation (170618 INT M HAR 8:37.7-9:13.2). Harry worked hard to improve his personal performance and aspired to play at a higher level, encouraged by his Father, who had played at academy level as a child, (170331 INT HAR 19:56.8-21:01.6) and pursued special arrangements to get Harry a trial. Although Harry enjoyed Brazilian Soccer, the importance he placed on playing the full game was demonstrated in his reflection upon his choice to give Brazilian Soccer up in favour of Academy football training. His Brazilian Soccer skills session: "... wasn't really like on the run, it was just like the tippy tappy stuff that I never do in a match" (170131 HAR 3:47.1-4:12.5).

Harry's town football team practices and matches were times to connect with his immediate and extended family. His Father helped to manage Harry's team, refereeing matches. Harry's grandparents and Mother regularly supported his weekend matches.

Harry demonstrated his excitement about taking part in trials for the Academy through a detailed account of what he had had to do. He was unconcerned about attending the trial when not knowing any of the other boys there. For Harry his footballing activities involved identifying with his team, and his Academy football was about being part of that higher

level of performance and an association with the professional club. He couldn't wait to collect his new Academy football strip.

Academy sessions took place at high quality floodlit facilities and were reminiscent of the structure and approach of Harry's Brazilian Soccer School; highly structured and disciplined with a sense of quality and occasion as documented in this contemporaneous field note:

"It felt like entering an amphitheatre, something dramatic could take place here, an inbuilt sense of occasion and expectation seemed to surround the facilities" (OBS 170313 M HAR).

Coaches had established a very friendly and collaborative coaching environment. Boys were self-motivated, led activities for each other and coaching took place in-game, leading to a positive and dynamic atmosphere. Coaches modelled the behaviours expected of the boys (OBS 170313 M HAR).

Notwithstanding Harry's delight in the fulfilment of his aspiration to play Academy football, he retained a very strong bond to his town club. He explained that he wouldn't want to give up his town club football: "Cos all of my friends are there" (170131 INT HAR 10:32.4-11:45.9). He explained the anxiety of friends who thought he may leave and his definitive rejection of the idea. It was clear that Harry had thought through the competing priorities of progressing his football and continuing to play with long term friends he valued:

"So at my stage or erm the squad one, it's a good stage to be at because you can still play for a side that's not an Academy" (170131 INT HAR 10:32.4-11:45.9).

Furthermore, Harry demonstrated a strong ethical commitment to his town side.

Previously boys from his team who had gone on to the Academy program had had to drop out of the town training, because of a clash of training nights. They retained their team place even though they hadn't supported club training. He felt lucky that an additional training night had become available "so I still get to train with the town club" (170131 INT HAR 11:45.9-12:19.) Harry was a team player. He was content to play whatever position

needed. When it was his turn to be substituted off, Harry took a ball to practise passing with a team-mate where he could still keep an eye on the game.

Harry experienced football both as a recreational activity and as a sporting passion. By the end of the study Harry was training or playing football at least four times a week, with matches during term time for his town team and in holidays for the Academy. Harry thrived in a structured coaching environment and his experiences were characterised by:

- An earnest desire to play well
- A commitment to working hard to develop his skills
- An aspiration to play at a higher level.

Harry was also a team player, highly committed to the friends he had made in his long-term football team. He was encouraged and supported by parents and grandparents who shared his enthusiasm and supported his aspirations.

Getting the moves – and having fun

Feeling good creating funny novel movements “getting the moves” and learning new tricks complemented Harry’s more serious focus on mastering competitive football. There were parallels with Harry’s football development in the way he developed his interest in trampolining. Harry’s initial interest in garden trampolining had been prompted by YouTube videos, reflected in one of his favourite tricks to jump off his treehouse catching a ball mid-flight before landing on the garden trampoline (161103 INT M HAR 3:30.0-4:15.0).

Garden trampolining was high energy, practiced daily in all weathers including rain (170131 INT HAR 0-0:13.4) as soon as he finished school and “just like fun”. It was Harry’s go to activity when “bored and I want to do something outside ...” (161103 INT M HAR 4:15.0-4:58.5). It was characterised by:

- Being spontaneous, unstructured and playful
- Imaginative and made-up tricks, games and challenges

- Adventurous moves with an element of jeopardy adding excitement, often inspired by Parkour YouTube videos.

Fun and enjoyment came from intrinsic feelings of novel movement, sometimes enhanced by sharing the humour of the activity with a friend. It involved performing creative shapes (HAR IMG_007) and sometimes bouncing together for instance synchronising “dabs” mid-air (HAR IMG_0056) replicating a “really popular” dance move which was going around school. There was a light-heartedness and silliness in this activity. Bouncing was a form of embodied amusement, extending to how others looked and moved. Harry was amused by a picture of his friend posing standing upright whilst mid-bounce, hanging in the air “just gravitating” (HAR IMG_0051; 161103 INT M HAR 3:30.0-4:15.0). Harry also created novel physical challenges, for instance trying to coordinate catching an oversize ball whilst bouncing requiring him to stretch, distort and manage his body in flight (IMG_0048).

Harry tried unsuccessfully to perfect recognisable trampoline moves such as “front somersaults and back twisting movements landing in an unplanned ‘heap’ on the trampoline bed, before bouncing up again and laughing” (Contemporaneous field note accompanying 170131 INT HAR). Mid-way through the study Harry shared his aspiration to join the trampoline club because:

“I just want to get good at it” so that “When my friends come around I can go on the trampoline and do like ... flicks” (170131 INT HAR 0:52.0-1:16.1)

[Transcription note: Harry spoke very shyly as he explained his wish to be able to show off flicks to his friends].

Harry’s formal trampolining skills improved rapidly after only a short period attending trampoline club. In a free-flowing session, participants received individual coaching on the moves they were practicing. Harry focused on perfecting his existing and significantly more complex moves, which he then practiced on his garden trampoline. His movements became more stylised resembling the formal moves of the sport of trampolining, for instance making solid landings and ‘presenting’ at the end of a move. Harry directed his

mother to video each of his new moves for his data, particularly his favourite “new trick”, a challenging front one and a half somersault to front drop of which he was particularly proud. This culminated in multiple unsuccessful attempts at a back pull-over, during which he dissolved into squeaking laughter bouncing upside down in a heap (170608 M HAR IMG_0021).

Harry practised confidently at home to master new moves, just as he applied himself to master his football skills. In contrast to his football, fun and enjoyment came not from mastery of new skills alone but also from the creative, playful movement sensations.

Playing and having fun – creating activities, with family and friends for re-creation

This same sense of fun and ready humour was associated with a variety of Harry’s home-based pursuits. Home-based physical activities were characteristically for relaxation; a time for refreshment and renewal of energies away from school and the more serious pursuit of competitive football. Activities were:

- Unstructured
- Often initiated spontaneously
- Highly social, focused upon engaging with Harry’s immediate family or best friend
- Frequently driven by Harry’s sense of humour and playful nature, for instance his hobby of “Prank(ing) off my sister” (See Appendix XVI).
- Time “to chill”.

Although Harry was saving hard to upgrade his computer gaming equipment, screen based pursuits did not feature highly in the activities he chose to profile, and Harry’s parents set limits on screen time. However, his viewing inspired his choice and experience of physical activity, for instance:

“... I was watching this YouTube of Cannibal and Guy and he was doing some crazy flips and some and I wanted to like try it, so I asked Mum errmm to try get me to do trampolining and then I started to do it a bit more at home” (170618 INT M HAR 16:30.9-17:05.3).

Harry's WWE wrestling computer game involved taking on the role of one of the wrestlers, showing life like moves (170618 INT M HAR 12:14.7-12:37.8), extending Harry's embodied sense of adventurous, novel movement.

Outdoors, summer water fights took place in the garden with his close friends. Other chill time activities included bottle flipping, which had "become really big" at school with "mostly all of the kids do(ing) it" where they competed to see "How many you have landed in a row" (161103 INT M HAR 0:35.5-3:26.0). Harry showed videos of himself honing his skills accompanied by humour and celebration when he successfully landed a bottle blind (HAR IMG_0076). He had "practiced enough to know exactly how to land" a selection of bottles which he had stored with precisely the right amount of water "and had to be protected" (170131 INT M HAR 2:31.9-3:26.0). Mastering bottle flipping was reminiscent of his interest in perfecting his trampoline moves and becoming a better footballer.

Meanwhile pushing furniture aside, the lounge provided the space for Harry and his friend to enjoy launching themselves on and off a giant exercise ball in a variety of ways. A balloon added challenge to the games they made up (HAR IMG_0057-0060).

Other activities were more energetic, but still driven by playful humour and silliness that Harry choreographed. For instance, inspired by a YouTube video Harry could not contain his amusement in recalling:

"Oh yeah we were [Transcription note: Giggles, then laughs, laughs again] ... we put teddies on the trampoline and we started bouncing on them. ... Oh yeah we were flattening the teddies".

(170131 INT HAR 1:34.2-2:20.6)

Harry engaged his Father in acting out a YouTube clip which involved a pillow being thrown at Harry's head, to which Harry responded by collapsing dramatically on his bed (IMG_0079). He also engaged his Mother and Father as hitmen with Nerf guns, whom he tried to escape whilst running up and down the stairs (170331 INT HAR 32:54.6-33:58.6).

Harry experienced physical activity as both mastery of skills for serious competitive endeavour and as a way of chilling. Fun and enjoyment came from sense of achievement in mastery of his activities but also from embodied enjoyment of creative playful movement sensations.

5.6 Reilly's story

Reilly was 9 years old and in Year 3 of her middle school when she started to collect data and lived with her mother and father, two older sisters and a younger brother in a town in Bedfordshire. She highlighted the fact that her house had a modestly sized garden and was on a busy main road which limited any pursuits outdoors at home. She had hamsters and a family dog, Kevin, who was an important member of the family with whom she walked and played daily. Reilly was familiar with the idea of doing research having taken part in the pilot study with me about what she and her classmates chose to do in their school play times (Appendix II). She engaged her Mother in taking photos and videos of her activities and in our discussions. Reilly also used a FitBit as a fun 'aide memoire' to recall her various activities.

5.6.1 Reilly's data collection and analysis activities

Reilly collected data over a 9 month period from September 2016 which included

Research outputs and <i>critical events</i>	Time line and data collection and analysis activities	
	Enrolled	160908 Initial meeting to discuss the research
	Data collection	
		170111 Invited researcher to Cheerleading Club
<i>Minor ankle injury</i>		170213 Invited researcher to baking afternoon at home
		170307 Discussion about FitBit readings
		170417 Invited researcher to holiday Extreme Camp
		170413 Invited researcher to pottery painting activity
Data collection review mind map (See Appendix XVII)		170504 Mind mapping to review data collected to date
		170609 Discussion about holiday pictures
Revised collage mind map to describe Reilly's data (See Appendix XVII)	Data analysis	170618 Review of researcher prepared draft collage of data

Figure 13 Reilly's timeline for data collection and analysis invitations for me to observe five different activities (Brownie rock climbing activity,

Cheerleading club, home baking afternoon, holiday Xtreme Camp and pottery painting).

She identified her key headings to describe her story of free-choice pursuits, by critiquing a draft collage mind map that I had compiled using examples of photographs and video data which appeared to depict each of her different activities (see Appendix XVIII).

5.6.2 Reilly's headings to describe her data

Table 9 shows the development of Reilly's headings developed from data collection planning, review and final analysis of data using collage mind maps (see Appendix XVIII).

Final headings are shown in red. Reilly appeared to differentiate between relaxing and active home/family based pursuits. I used this feature of her headings to describe summary headings (shown in blue) to group Reilly's headings and simplify further detailed inductive analysis without losing the detail of Reilly's headings. This resulted in two summary headings comprising 'Relaxation and recreation' (grouping 'Home', 'Chillin', 'Pets' and 'Friends') and Family activities (bringing together 'Family' and 'Outings').

Appendix XVIII shows the NVivo modelling of Reilly's headings, demonstrating the use of summary headings together with Reilly's final two headings 'Creative' and 'Athletic and Athletic Injury'. Each of the headings and summary headings which are used to guide inductive analysis are circled in blue in Table 9.

'Recreation and relaxation' described home-based activities which provided opportunities for refreshment from school and other commitments including structured physical activities. This often involved playing with her family dog and was also associated with the visit of a particular best friend who had recently moved away. These activities were playful in nature; unstructured and focused upon having fun.

Table 9 Reilly's development of headings and sub-headings to describe her data

Reilly's data collection review		Reilly's final collage mind map		
Sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings	Headings	Summary headings
Bedroom & Cuddly toy families	Home		Home	Relaxation and recreation
Garden – not winter		Trampoline		
Front room & computer				
Living room & TV		TV	Chillin'	
	Corner shop			
		Hamsters	Pets	
		Kevin (dog)		
		Ursula came to visit	Friends	
Jarvis (their dog)	Grandma and Grandpa		Family	Family activities
	Grandad			
Ben, George, Neil (cousins)	Aunty Cate and Uncle Simon			
		Rugby tour		
		Meals out		
		Beach		
	Priory Mariner		Outings	
Dog walks	Russel Park			
Bike rides				
Football & Dad's coaching				
		Lego Friends	Creative	
		Pottery Shack		
		Soap making		
		Braiding/Brownies		
		Rock climbing /Brownies	Athletic & Athletic injury	
		Athletic tournament		
		Cycling		
		Cheerleading		
		Swimming		
		Active Adventures & Camp Extreme		
		Dog walking		

Meanwhile 'Family activities' described regular unstructured physical activity characteristically initiated by Reilly's mother, involving "getting out" into the outdoors and incorporating the family dog's daily exercise. Family activities also involved special family outings. Family activities were fun, and enjoyment came from connecting and spending time as a family engaging in teasing and "silliness" and a familiar family humour which bonded them.

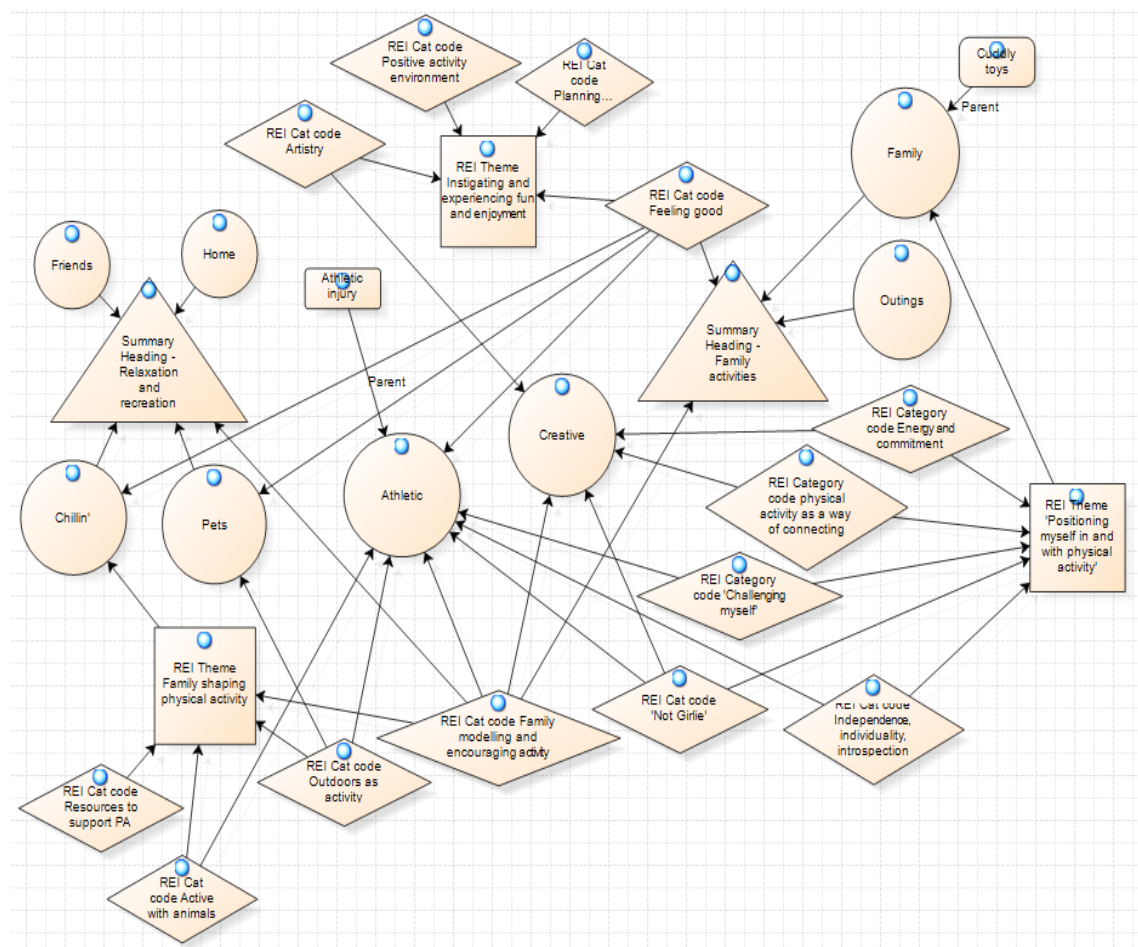
Reilly's third heading 'Athletic' described her participation in a wide range of extra-curricular school sports, swimming, Cheerleading Club and her love of holiday Xtreme Camps. Finally, juxtapositioned against these high energy pursuits, Reilly identified the importance of being 'Creative', and highlighted photos of herself enjoying a range of home and family-based creative activities, from baking to soap-making; pottery painting to Brownie crafting.

5.6.3 Inductive coding of Reilly's chosen data

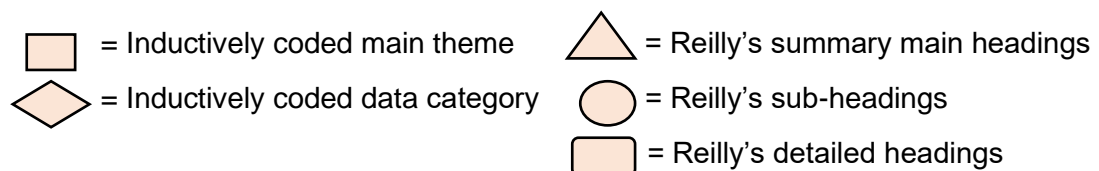
Inductive coding of Reilly's chosen data Inductive coding generated 93 codes, which after review were consolidated into 78 codes providing three key themes: 'Positioning myself in and with physical activity'; 'Instigating and experiencing fun and enjoyment'; and 'Family shaping physical activity'. Each theme had a number of sub-themes, shown in the NVivo mapping of inductively generated themes onto Reilly's own headings (see Figure 13). This demonstrates that each theme is associated with each of Reilly's headings/summary headings. However, there were differences in the mapping of inductively analysed sub-themes:

- 'Family modelling and encouraging activity' underpins each of Reilly's headings describing her pursuits.
- 'Feeling good' which describes the humour, teasing and silliness in pursuits is associated with all except the pursuits Reilly describes under her heading 'Creative'.
- 'Feeling good' was particularly associated with 'Family activities' and Outings'; and with relaxation time 'Chillin' and engaging with the family dog ('Pets').
- Reilly's heading 'Athletic' was associated strongly with the overall theme of 'Positioning myself in and also with physical activity', 'Outdoors as activity' and activities with her family dog ('Active with animals').

These distinctive associations with inductively coded sub-themes and Reilly's own headings were used to shape the narrative of Reilly's experiences of physical activity.



KEY:



NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data and inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Figure 14 Reilly's headings and inductively coded themes

5.6.4 Reilly's experiences of physical activity

Reilly considered herself lucky because she got to try all sorts of activities which her Father's sports coaching company ran (160920 INT F REI Field note). She was fiercely proud of what her Father did, often mentioning his work and the adults associated with the company who included her Grandfather (161017 OBS F REI Field note). During school holidays Reilly particularly enjoyed adventurous activities attending Xtreme Camp and

having access to other adventurous activities, such as climbing walls and other portable equipment to play in the garden.

Family outings included treats such as indoor surf boarding (170213 OBS F REI 11:53.9-12:30.7) and visits to a trampoline park (170307 INT F REI 13:06.3-25:22.4). Reilly's Mother encouraged daily activities getting Reilly and her younger siblings 'out' during their holidays. This involved walks or cycling locally, often associated with exercising and playing with the family dog.

Reilly's Mother was key to Reilly accessing all her free-time pursuits as the organiser of the family's busy schedule of activities. She was also an active role model for Reilly and her siblings, who each participated regularly in organised sports and joined family activities.

Athletic: "boys don't get judged playing football and rugby" (170407 F REI OBS Field note)

Reilly was surrounded with opportunities to take up a wide range of sports and physical activities; and by close family who were active themselves and coached sports and physical activity. Her Grandmother who had been a PE teacher and one older sister taught swimming alongside their Mother, whilst their Father and Grandfather had participated in and coached sports. Reilly's Mother strove to maintain activity as part of the family's daily life. Reilly's Father was persuaded to get a puppy shortly before the start of the study, reasoning that a commitment to dog walking would get him more active.

Reilly described a range of sports and structured activities under her heading of 'Athletic'. She was energetic, often recording high levels of activity on her FitBit which she reported didn't feel any different "just a normal day" (170307 INT F REI 13:06.3-25:22.4). She was proud of being selected to take part for her school in a wide range of extra-curricular sports competitions. These were one-off events and not associated with regular attendance of after school clubs. After one false start she had settled into weekly

swimming lessons at her Mother's swimming school and, again after some reservations, Reilly had just joined her two older sisters' Cheerleading Club.

The key feature of her experience of physical activity under this heading was the opportunity Reilly took to establish her identity as an active girl, keen to participate in organised sport and structured activities. Reilly described herself as "very competitive" (170307 INT F REI 0-7:33.3). This competitiveness manifested itself in striving to be the best in an activity, particularly seeking to prove her ability in competition with boys.

In Xtreme camp Reilly cajoled the girls' team to build the best shelter and assault course. She complained that the boys' team had stolen the girls' ideas for their assault course. She was the first to eagerly whisk through the boy's course to demonstrate how inferior it was to the girls' more challenging course. She related with great satisfaction how, during recreational water polo, she had successfully tackled and stolen the ball off a boy (170213 F REI OBS 30:37.8-31:05.4). She spent a lot of her lunchtime breaks at school playing football with the boys and just one girl friend, the other girls being a bit too 'girlie' to play (170307 INT F REI 11:23.3-25:22.4). Reilly reflected that activities were: "Sillier when it is just girls. I think I do act a bit differently when boys are around. I feel more comfortable with all girls" (170307 INT F REI 31:07.7-41:42.4). Notwithstanding, Reilly maintained that she "would have liked to be a boy because (she) would have got to play all the boy's stuff" (170307 INT F REI 28:45.0-31:07.8). She expressed frustration about her experience of being a girl interested in playing sports saying: "boys don't get judged playing football and rugby" (170407 F REI OBS Field note).

Her initial reticence about joining Cheerleading Club was about the sport's 'girlie' image:

..." normally in like the films it's like American Cheerleaders which is like, rather like girlie and stuff and like so I didn't want to do it at first because I'm not that girlie. ... Like you have to wear pink clothes and you've got to wear bows and got to be all pretty and things" (170307 INT F REI 0-7:33.3).

She concluded however that Cheerleading was:

“... not actually girlie it's quite serious, you could get seriously hurt and things like that, when I first tried it was really, really hard just to do a simple elevator, and now I can do lots of other things” (170307 INT F REI 0-7:33.3).

Reilly actively promoted “girl power”, setting up this shout when it was the girl's turn to set a trail at Xtreme Camp. She was brave, took on physical challenges and worked hard at her activities, striving to do well. She described how running at school and catching up with the boys, being the fastest girl hurt and that when she ran she got “loads of stitches” (170307 INT F REI 44:01.7-49:49.1). In body surfing Reilly described how hard it was to get up from lying flat, and then balance on the board standing, whilst the water was pushing against her (170213 OBS F REI 11:53.9-12:30.7).

Furthermore, an injured knee which Reilly profiled in her data under the heading ‘Athletic injury’ was something to be accepted as part of the process of taking part in sports and then moved on from. It was not something to put Reilly off an activity.

This picture of Reilly as a confident and empowered active girl is in stark contrast to Reilly outside her comfort zone (170307 INT F REI 7:34.3-8:18.9). Typically, this occurred when she did not know anyone else as part of the activity and at these times Reilly needed reassurance before joining in. Observing her at Cheerleading Club, Reilly at first stood slightly apart watching other girls working arms folded and inwardly focused upon herself (170111 PHO F REI IMG_0758). This changed rapidly following a successful group rehearsal of a move facilitated by the coach. The physical experience of the successful lift gave Reilly confidence to engage with the group and connected her socially (170111 PHO F REI IMG_0755). She then actively encouraged group members to gather and keep practising.

Social engagement during activities remained focused upon mastering new moves and tasks. Reilly shied away from conflict, physically removing herself from girls in her group who started to fall out when building their shelter. Reilly was focused upon creating the best shelter, one that would beat the boys' shelter. Later in the session she negatively

stereotyped girls generally as typically falling out over trivial matters: “Oh my God you stole my hairbrush” (170407 OBS F REI Field note).

Having positive coaches and teachers who she knew and who nurtured her confidence to participate was important to Reilly in starting new activities and facing new challenges. For instance, she was reticent to move up to the right ability group in swimming:

“When I was in Year 3, I tried the top group but ‘cos there was a teacher called Dan and he was really mean, and I didn’t like it and there was a middle group ... so I stayed in the middle group.” (170213 OBS F REI 34:43.2-35:15.8)

In contrast Reilly, had been sensitively welcomed by the Cheerleading Club Coach, in whom Reilly had had complete faith as she explained in her role as flier being tossed in the air by her team:

“All you have to really do is let them lift you and don’t be scared and just basically do the things that (Coach) has told you to do. ... some people are scared to do it but it’s sort of easy for me.” (170307 INT F REI 0-7:33.3).

When asked what it felt like being lifted, she responded: “Just basically like being thrown up in the air or whatever” (170307 INT F REI 0-7:33.3). Reilly remained very nonchalant about her role and experience, pragmatically describing the flier’s role in terms of particular skills or moves to be mastered.

Reilly gained great satisfaction in having her skills noticed. She was obviously proud that people said she “was really fast” in the swimming pool (170213 OBS F REI 31:05-31:37.2).

Once confident within a social group, Reilly enjoyed using her skills in a playful way to amuse her friends. Rock climbing with the Brownies was an opportunity to demonstrate her previous experience. She climbed confidently opting for the harder side of the rock face, then when she couldn’t find her next hand hold, she simply stepped off the rock so that the pulley took her weight and she was lowered smiling and waving to her friends. This became her ‘party piece’, the next time scampering up the easier side of the climb

before stepping off at the top. On her third and final turn she offered to help a Brownie climbing alongside her: “I’ll go up with you. I’ll tell you what to do” (161017 OBS F REI Field note). At Xtreme Camp Reilly initiated excitement, spontaneously running off in a random direction, inciting others to accompany her in loud shouts of “We do Parkour”, vicariously raising the experience of free-flowing daring movements of that sport (170407 OBS F REI Field note). Xtreme Camp was an opportunity to socialise and make new friends “having a good chat” over lunchtime (170407 OBS F REI Field note) and instigate rough and tumble play against the boys and male leaders (170407 OBS F REI).

Creative

Reilly’s creative activities were as diverse as her physical activities including:

- Crafting at her Grandmother’s house (190908 PHO F REI IMG_0012)
- Braiding bracelets with the Brownies,
- Baking at home (170213 PHO F REI IMG_0472)
- Special treats such as annual ceramics painting sessions (170419 OBS F REI Field note).

Reilly particularly highlighted the range of indoor and outdoor creative activities available to Reilly at her Grandmother’s house, which was “equipped with a range of interesting play areas (170213 OBS F REI Field note).

Reilly’s Mother encouraged Reilly to give up an Xtreme Camp week to accommodate their annual afternoon’s pottery painting treat, saying she liked Reilly “to do a variety of things even if she did like Xtreme Camp” (170413 OBS F REI Field note). Reilly became absorbed when crafting with an attention to detail echoed in the way she focused upon the mastery of her physical activities. “Reilly ... had a stillness about her” (170413 OBS F REI Field note) taking time to choose, design and paint her pottery.

Relaxation and recreation and family dog 'Kevin'

Reilly's activities collected under her headings 'Relaxation and recreation' had two strong characteristics. Activities connected Reilly with her family and with the outdoors. Activities were full of humour, fun and teasing, and playful. Activities often involved Kevin, the family dog, who initiated much family time actively chilling together associated with Kevin's regular daily exercise. Kevin's care was shared by the whole family (160908 PHO F REI IMG_003). Reilly routinely made time before school to play in the garden with him (160908 PHO F REI IMG_0094). As a puppy, Reilly introduced him to the football and how to play. At her Grandparents' house she and Kevin were joined in three-way play by her Grandparents' dog Jarvis (160908 PHO F REI IMG_0090).

Reilly and her siblings devised games and competitions with Kevin:

... "it's like steal the ball off of Kevin ... Someone kicked the football really far and you let Kevin go 5 seconds after you went ... And so you had to run and try and get the ball and pass the line and try without Kevin trying to get' it" (170213 OBS F REI 0:32.0-0:57.5)

Reilly always won whilst she had the 5 second lead and competitively queried her sister's claim that she could beat Kevin without the early start. She laughed as she recalled how the game turned into rugby, which Kevin liked more, saying she also liked rugby. This reminded me how Reilly initiated and enjoyed rough and tumble play with the boys at Xtreme Camp (170407 OBS F REI).

Reilly said she didn't go into the garden in the winter, but played a lot of football there in the summer: "cos Dad's a football coach, he like brings footballs and erm the posts home so we put the posts in the garden ... and we play with Kevin" (170213 OBS F REI 7:11.0-7:54.8). Nonetheless many of Reilly's photographs showed her outside wrapped up warmly against inclement weather. Only concerns that she might get her favourite leggings muddied appeared to deter her from outdoor activities (170213 OBS F REI 9:48.6-10:29.7). Space for large games was limited, leading to Reilly's Mother's concern

to get her children out each holiday day. This was highlighted in a range of outdoor park, lakeside and seaside photographs as settings for walks, where Reilly was pictured playing with Kevin or biking alongside the family (170108 PHO F REI IMG_0172 and 0174; 170415 PHO F REI).

Family and outings

Data in Reilly's 'Family' and 'Outings' headings were associated with 'Feeling good' from having fun, as a family, but were linked to entertainment rather than physical activity; special events, days out and holidays (170606 PHO F REI IMG_4633, 4965 and 4967), a cinema trip (170213 OBS F REI 12:58.1-13:23.6) and visit to a theme park. The latter was linked to a trip to support Reilly's young brother's rugby tour, emphasising the mutual support that the family gave to each other's activities. Having fun was also, however, reflected in the simplest of play activities as illustrated in Reilly's series of selfies and portraits of her Father, culminating in one with a Playdough pancake on his head (160908 PHO IMG_0020;0021; 0013 and 0015).

Each of Reilly's chosen pursuits was encouraged by the active enthusiasms of her close family, supported by easy access to a wide range of physical activities. Each of her chosen pursuits was a source of fun and enjoyment from:

- A sense of achievement and reward for her endeavours in mastering physical challenges
- A sense of connection and shared humour, teasing and silliness in playful family activities
- Physical fun and rough and tumble associated with exercising and playing with the family dog
- Creative endeavours as a time to re-fresh and renew energies.

Reilly worked hard to succeed in structured physical activities and sport but needed a supportive coaching environment to flourish. She constantly sought to prove herself as a

girl interested in being physically active, skilled and able to participate in sport and physical activity alongside boys.

5.7 Vixen Swift's story

Vixen Swift was 9 years old when she started to collect data and lived with her Mother, Father and 11 year old sister in a small rural village in Buckinghamshire. She had a pet hamster and a family dog, Blackboy Archie, who was an important family member and a focus for regular walks. Vixen Swift and her sister attended a private school, about a 40 minute drive from home, where she occasionally boarded overnight (161123 INT F VS: 0:45.7-1:06.8), when both her parents were working. Day school followed an extended daily timetable until 6.30pm each day. She then had half an hour's homework to complete each evening. Simultaneously, she had relatively active days with curriculum time PE or Games four out of five days a week (170308 INT F VS 15:47.7-16:17.4) and was expected to play in at least one school team (hockey, netball or rounders dependent on the school term) every Tuesday afternoon (161123 INT F VS: 0:45.7-1:06.8).

Vixen Swift participated relatively independently in the collection and analysis of her data. She collected most of her own photographs and video sequences and directed others (generally her Mother or sister) to take others. Vixen Swift did not seek parental support in our discussions. Discussions led to the generation of more data and later analysis of what she had collected. Generally, either her Mother, Father or Granny would be somewhere nearby where we gathered to review her photos and videos but were rarely called upon. She enjoyed using the FitBit to identify the number of steps she did but was a little hampered by a school ruling that she could not wear a FitBit in PE and games classes.

5.7.1 Vixen Swift's data collection and analysis activities

Vixen Swift collected 108 photographs and 20 videos which we discussed to generate data and then analysed over an 11 month period from September 2016 as shown in Figure 15. She also shared six different activities with me (drama club, after school boarding activities, horse riding lesson, two drama activities, family walk). Vixen Swift enjoyed writing and opted to write her own short story about her free-choice activities (in Section 6.6) and this, together with her annotated collage mind map (see Appendix XX), provided the data from which we developed key headings to describe her data about her free-choice pursuits.

Research outputs/ <i>critical events</i>	Time line and data collection and analysis activities	
	Enrolled	160925 First meeting to discuss helping with the study
	Data collection	161027 Shared half-term holiday drama club with researcher
		161123 Shared boarding evening at school with researcher
<i>VS had fallen at her horseriding class shortly before the one she invited the researcher to share</i>		
		170121 Shared horseriding lesson with researcher
		170217 VS invited researcher to see her performance in village pantomime
Selection of FitBit graphs to show weekday and weekend activity patterns using numbers of steps as an indicator and aide memoire to recall activities		170308 Discussion about activities shown in FitBit readings
		170412 Shared Easter Holiday Forest school day with researcher
Draft collage mind map to describe data (See Appendix XIX)		170521 Researcher joined extended family walk with VS
VS story of her free choice pursuits		Data analysis 170610 Discussion and development of a collage mind map to summarise data
		170918 VS prepared her story of her free choice pursuits
Anotated final collage mind map to describe data (See Appendix XIX)		170831 Discussion about headings in VS's story and collage mind map to describe her data
	Review	170831 Feedback on the resarch experience

Figure 15 Vixen Swift's timeline of data collection and analysis

5.7.2 Vixen Swift's headings to describe her data

Table 10 Vixen Swift's development of headings and sub-headings to describe her data

Data collection planning discussion (160925)		Final collage mind map		Vixen Swift's story	
Headings	Sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings	Headings	Sub-headings
Playing with friends					
Watching TV		Entertainment	TV and DVD	Chilling	
Reading	Adventure stories		Reading		
Writing	Writing competition				
Using Kindle Fire for computer games	Minecraft - construction			Play	
		Lazy days	Make believe play		Playmobil Build a bears
				Piano playing	
Family / extended family time		Family time	Meals out Glamorous		
Horse riding			Horse riding	Horse riding	
			Forest school holiday activity		
		Outdoors	Climbing Holiday beaches Family walks	Climbing	Trees Cliffs
Blackboy Archie (Family dog)		Animals	Blackboy Archie		
Hamster			Marshmallow (Hamster)		
		Selfies	Chilling and selfies* Dramatic selfies	Selfies	
				Singing	
		Drama	Village pantomime Drama holiday club	Village panto	

Table 10 shows how Vixen Swift's headings to describe her chosen pursuits developed. This started with the pursuits Vixen Swift identified at the outset of the study during planning for data collection. She then reviewed her data using a collage mind map to group her data under headings shown in red. Finally, Vixen Swift prepared her own story

(Section 6.6) about her chosen free-time pursuits and key elements of her story are shown in blue headings.

This shows two consistent strands of headings in Vixen Swift's data from planning through collection and analysis of data:

- Horse riding
- Playing and chilling at home (comprising reading, watching TV and playing computer games for entertainment, and lazy days)

Other pursuits featured strongly in our initial discussions and were represented in her summary of data on her collage mind map but did not appear in her final story of her chosen pursuits (Family time and Blackboy Archie/Marshmallow). Conversely 'Singing' and 'Piano playing' was identified for the first time in her final story. Table 10 shows Vixen Swift's emergent final headings (in blue), which I created by grouping the headings she had identified over the course of the study. This provided the headings 'Chilling and Play'; 'Horse riding'; 'Climbing' (strongly associated with an earlier heading 'Outdoors'); 'Selfies' and 'Village Panto' (strongly associated with her broader interest in 'Drama' identified as a key heading during data collection). Appendix XXI shows the NVivo modelling of these used to deductively code Vixen Swifts data, alongside the more detailed inductive analysis of her data.

5.7.3 Inductive coding of Vixen Swift's chosen data

Inductive coding of Vixen Swift's data resulted in the use of an initial 116 codes, which reduced to 106 during the review and modelling of her data. Three inductively coded themes ('Regenerating'; 'Mastering Activities' and Active with Others') and a further two categories of coding ('Being Creative' and 'Being Outdoors') were generated. Figure 16 shows the NVivo modelling of inductive themes and categories of codes cross-referenced with Vixen Swift's own headings to describe her chosen data. This shows that each of

5.7.4 Vixen Swift's experiences of physical activity

Vixen Swift opened her story of her free-time pursuits highlighting the impact of her active school week and extended school days:

“My school days are very long and because of that I actually don't have a lot of spare time, although I relax often and do quite lots of activities ...” (see Section 6.6)

This shaped her pursuits, such that some activities, for instance drama, were only possible as intensive holiday activities rather than regular membership of a weekly drama club (161123 INT F VS: 6:48.4-

7:25.7). In addition, weekends were Vixen Swift's opportunity for refreshing and re-energising: “Saturday and Sunday are generally quite relaxing” and Vixen Swift was reminded by her FitBit readings that she had “sat by (the) fire and had a gross on Sunday” (170308 INT F VS 0:54.1-1:41.2).

Vixen Swift identified a variety of different pursuits from lone, sedentary pursuits such as piano playing to group horse riding lessons, drama and Forest School holiday weeks with friends. She felt that that variety in her pursuits, “Make(s) things more fun” (161123 INT F VS 9:34.1-10:16.6). The opportunity for regenerating her mental and physical energies in her free-choice pursuits characterised much of Vixen Swift's narrative of her physical activity pursuits.

Chilling and playing as an opportunity for being creative and re-energising

‘Regeneration’ which comprised ‘Relaxing’ and ‘Having and Creating Fun’ was most visible in Vixen Swift's heading ‘Chilling and Playing’ and was closely associated with ‘Selfies’. The opportunity to re-energise came from having ‘Lazy days’ relaxing with an iPad, the TV or reading; playing games at home or practicing piano.

161123 MEM FIELD-VS: After school recreation time - extract

I had arrived at the school via a very isolated country route and long single track and left via a more main road but nonetheless the school was in a small remote village and the vast majority of children would have to be driven to school. I was struck by the daily routine that parents would have to deliver and collect children from school. There seemed to be a lot of waiting around not only by parents but also siblings and again I was reminded of other times I had witnessed children waiting for their world to be organised for them before they could get going and actually live it.

Reflexive thinking 18: Impact of location of school and parental support on PA

Sources of fun and enjoyment in relaxed sedentary pursuits were characterised by imaginative and creative activities, particularly playing with ‘Selfies:

“Selfies. Wonderful selfies. I LOVE them so much! And I also enjoy playing with them often!!!! Often when I wake up I will sit on the sofa and chill ☺!” [Vixen Swift’s own emphasis and punctuation.] (See section 6.5.1)

This love of playing with selfies extended from a lone chilling activity on the sofa to engaging with a friend, her sister or Father to take turns to shoot multiple videos of each other performing dramatic dance sequences (161125 VID F VS IMG_0288; 0302; 0295). She had also engaged her Sister in videoing “slomo’s” (pretend dramatic slow motion sketches) saying “So yeah, there’s a lot of strange stuff in there” in relation to her ongoing data collection (170121 INT F VS 4:59.0-5:55.5). The focus of the activity was about having fun together, creating strange, humorous videos to the amusement of each other. The activity was deliberately silly, causing Vixen Swift to strictly veto selfie pictures on her collage mind map from being made public (see Appendix XX).

Under her heading of ‘Entertainment’; reading, TV and playing computer games provided Vixen Swift with solitary time and space. This was time to relax physically and become absorbed, for instance in her favourite genre of “mystery ghosts” and “very creepy” adventure books (170610 INT F VS 3:21.3-3:46.7), which featured the character “Vixen Swift” her chosen research name. She pictured herself reading at the library (PHO 161124-161218 IMG_0453) but also creating her own space to read as part of a family meal out (PHO 161124-161218 IMG_0455). Reading complemented her love of writing stories and also supplied ideas for creating scenes in her Halloween holiday drama week (161031 F VS OBS Background). Reading also nourished Vixen Swift’s imaginative sense of humour which she shared with her Sister. For instance, they were highly amused by an idea in one of their books about “a party in menswear” (170610 INT F VS 4:17.2-4:29.7) and again this sense of the ridiculous to amuse, appeared in Vixen Swift’s drama and dramatic play. Make believe play was something that Vixen Swift undertook simply when

bored for instance creating a café in the living room to which she invited her Mother as a willing customer (161125 F VS IMG_0461).

Free-time pursuits as a time for regeneration were not solely associated with chilling and play. Vixen Swift's more active structured pursuits gathered under her headings 'Horse riding' and 'Village panto', were also associated as time to refresh and re-energise, particularly when given the opportunity to shape what she did in activity sessions. Her favourite thing about horse riding was when her class left the training paddock and no longer had to concentrate on steering the horse around tight courses:

“... I like to go in the fields where there are not that many corners we can bump into. And also it's more freeing”. (170521 INT F VS 1:30.8-1:56.9)

She also highlighted open days, where the focus was upon having fun with the horses, when riders created their own courses to move through, dressed the horses up and had time to socialise and often celebrated with special meal treats. Vixen Swift empathised with the ponies she rode; she imagined the horses' embarrassment at being dressed up in tinsel for Christmas and described how her horse Murphy “didn't like it” and “stamped a lot and made it all fall off.” For her the character of the ponies she rode made riding fun (170521 INT F VS 2:41-3:08.9).

Enjoyment of some agency within structured activities was also apparent in her drama interests, in which she excelled. She had already been part of the “village panto” for two years when during the study, she was cast in the lead role of 'Humpty Dumpty'. Vixen Swift enjoyed performing, particularly with people she liked and with whom she could work collaboratively to develop scenes. She described the best things about her week long drama holiday club as:

“... it's fun and you can choose what you want to do. We invented it (her group's scene) ourselves kind of on a base line. The fact that it is quite a small group and it's nice and cosy and we have nice people who do it.” (161113 INT F VS)

She was keen to repeat the experience and liked the “spooky themes” chosen by the participants. Her love of the sense of the ridiculous contributed to a dramatic end to her group’s performance: “Aaaannnnd ... I also like when we all die at the end ... seventeen of us,” (161027 INT F VS) which she performed with gusto.

The importance of a small group of nice people with whom to share creative collaborative pursuits was also evident in Vixen Swift’s enjoyment of her Forest School holiday week with her Sister and two friends. Together they constructed a complex shelter. Their imagination and sense of fun was reflected in the construction, which boasted amongst other features: written estate agent details, an outdoor toilet and toilet roll delivery pulley system from the shelter (PHO 170412 F VS IMG_0890 & 0891).

Vixen Swifts’ data included a range of outdoor activities including family time outdoors, which particularly featured the family dog:

“Generally we go to the beach when we’re on holiday. Whereas when we are here we go on walks, which is sometimes fun, but sometimes a bit boring” (170610 INT F VS 13:38.9-14:18.2)

She shaped her own enjoyment on family walks physically and imaginatively. For instance, she showed herself running ahead with her Sister to climb and hide from their parents up a tree (170521 PHO F VS IMG_1147); clambering over rocks on the beach and on another occasion shared imaginative musings about what the family dog might be thinking and how he perceived her.

‘Horse riding’ and the ‘Village panto’: mastering skills and crafting performances

Whilst horse riding and drama could be relaxing and regenerative, both also involved mastery of the activity, which required concentration and endeavour.

Vixen Swift was the youngest rider in her graded riding class. Classes were not a time for socialising but for concentration on riding technique. Her pony, Blue, had to be continually

coaxed by the instructor to respond to Vixen Swift's instructions and was very hard work. Nonetheless, Vixen Swift revealed the challenge the horse posed was a source of fun:

“... he is quite a stubborn horse ... If I had a horse, I'd have him. ... I like him because he's hard and it makes it really fun”. (170121 INT F VS 0:37.6-0:58.6)

Vixen Swift further demonstrated her resilience in coping with the physical challenges of riding by revealing she had fallen off in both of her previous two lessons. She was “a bit nervous” going into her next lesson (170121 INT F VS 1:14.4-1:41.2). Then she brushed off the thought of falling, saying that to be a proper rider you had to fall off nine times. It was a frosty, cold day but Vixen Swift had been warm from the effort of riding, and only noticed that her hands had been cold giving her a challenge to steer the pony who felt “stronger than like a car” (170121 INT F VS 1:52.9-2:19.1). She explained the complexity of concentrating on several details at once, highlighting the technicalities of riding; the jumping position, “toes pointing out and everything” (170121 INT F VS 2:56.1-3:04.7). Later in the study she reflected on the frustration of riding Blue and the impact that he had upon her:

“... the really annoying thing, the thing that made me lose my confidence for horse riding is because I always got Blue, and Blue's hard to ride. And then you get shouted at because it looks like you're not paying attention, but you are you just, he's just not doing it as he should be. ... Yeah, it's like waaaaa I'm trying (1)”
(170521 INT F VS 4:33.1-4:59.6)

[(1) Transcription note: Intonation to show the frustration of the situation].

Whilst Vixen Swift's drama activities remained very social and collaborative, the mastering of a performance involved concentration and sustained endeavour just like horse riding. Her holiday drama course, for instance, comprised five long days which accommodated parents in full time work. The collaborative nature of the activity was led by the drama facilitator, whom Vixen Swift liked very much. “A very democratic, shared.... working

partnership between the adult drama leader and children generally pervaded” (Field note: 161027 F VS OBS).

The participants were physically active for most of the day. Starting with a physical warm up and interspersed with active games to refresh and renew participants’ creative energies. Excited bubbling chatter accompanied participants as they worked on scenes in small groups throughout the day. Within this environment, Vixen Swift sometimes appeared reflective and self-contained:

“In amongst this gentle maelstrom VS is a wonderfully still soul. She appears thoughtful but without reserve. Her smile is quick to dawn across her and she does suddenly jig or momentarily grab a friend’s arm to engage them in a funny point.”

(161027 OBS F VS)

She appears to use this reflexivity to get into character:

“I think about how I’d like my character to be, I think about how that would be what they would do, and I just do it.” (161027 F VS 1:40.5-2:00.0)

Vixen Swift was skilled and knowledgeable about stage craft. For instance, she described learning the drama scenes in “blocks” which they repeatedly rehearsed and then fitted together in a seamless 15 minute showing. She had a confident stage presence, commanding the front of stage and speaking out (161027 OBS F VS: 170217 F VS PHO IMG_0473).

Vixen Swift’s choices and approaches to her free-choice pursuits were characterised by the opportunity to refresh and re-energise both physically and mentally. Much of her meagre free-time during school term was devoted to unstructured informal recreation, which she described as “chilling and play”. This was characterised by home-based play with her immediate family, which comprised imaginative make believe, dramatic or “selfie” play for fun and enjoyment. However, Vixen Swift also had a strong commitment to mastering skills of horse riding and stage craft when she had the opportunity to do drama.

She worked hard in both these activities, gaining enjoyment and satisfaction in mastering performance.

Positive experiences of instruction and pursuing activities with small groups of supportive friends was important to Vixen Swift. She was often active and drawn into fun antics by her older Sister with whom she shaped her activities in family time together (170521 F VS OBS). Her parents and grandparents also supported her activities and actively nurtured her interest in spending time outdoors and walking, which was associated with her much loved family dog.

Uniquely amongst the coresearchers, there was a complete absence of traditional competitive sport in her chosen activities. Even within her after school club activities (which were a compulsory part of her extended school day) she chose non-sport activities.

5.8 Overview of coresearchers' findings

Coresearchers' findings revealed three strands of insights about their chosen physical activity experiences:

- A rich breadth of chosen activities which revealed a number of themes across the coresearcher group
- Similarities and differences in coresearchers' preferred ways of participating in the research inquiry which in turn guided the research process
- Underlying factors to which coresearchers referred and appeared to influence their physical activity choices.

5.8.1 Themes underlying coresearchers' headings to describe their physical activity choices

Coresearchers revealed a wide choice of pursuits (62) which could be broadly characterised as outdoor recreational activities (17); coached, structured sports (14); informal play (8); social pursuits (7), inactive relaxation pursuits (6); selfies and creative portraiture (3); outings and holiday activities (3) and miscellaneous other pursuits

comprising playing music, drama, crafting and baking (4). Every coresearcher's experience of physical activity within their choice of pursuits was different. However, across this diversity, coresearchers' headings revealed a number of underlying themes in their chosen experiences recognising physical activity as:

- An opportunity for chilling, playing and having fun
- A time to be creative
- A way of spending time with family members;
- An opportunity to master the skills of and participation in activities
- An opportunity to express and practise identity.

These themes overlapped in complex layers as shown in Figure 17. Some themes, for instance pursuits that involved mastering activities, were shared by a number of coresearchers. Other themes highlighted distinctive experiences of individual coresearchers, for instance Reilly (REI) provided a body of data that demonstrated her interest in a variety of creative pursuits.

Whilst the schematic is helpful to give an overview of the complexity, scope and nature of the experiences coresearchers shared about their chosen pursuits, underlying themes were not static or prescriptive. Coresearchers could be seen constructing their experiences in the moment. Individual experiences of similar activities and pursuits changed during the study and different coresearchers experienced similar activities and pursuits differently.

In addition, I was interested in the inductively generated themes in coresearchers' data which coresearchers did not themselves foreground in their headings. These inductively coded themes appeared to be unconsciously embedded in their lived experiences for instance:

- Fun and enjoyment underpinning most of their chosen pursuits
- Experiences of the natural environment as part of outdoor activities
- The physicality and movement sensations associated with physical activity choices

- Physical activity as refreshment from day to day responsibilities
- The role of imagination driving and enhancing physical activity choices

I continue to explore these themes in the next Chapter 6: Discussion of findings.

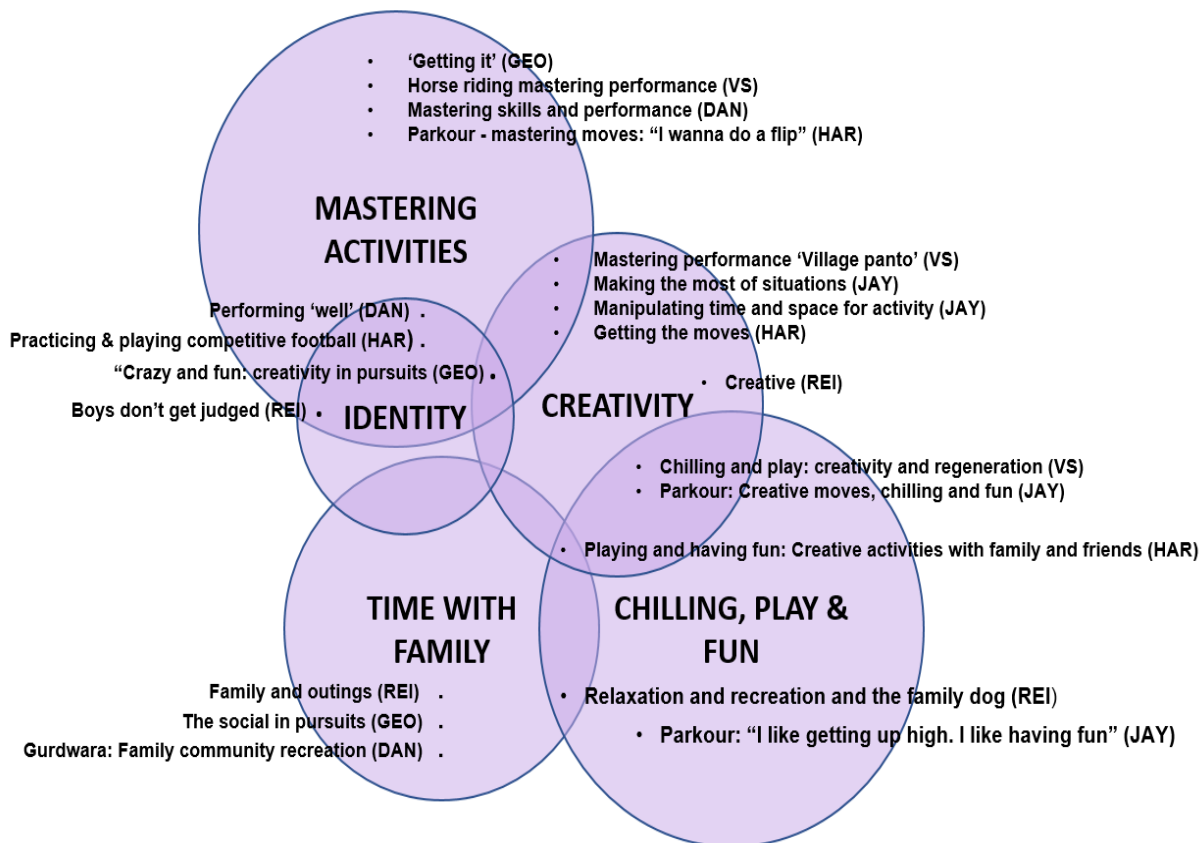


Figure 17: Coresearchers' headings associated with inductively generated themes

5.8.2 How researchers chose to participate and guided the research process

Each coresearcher approached the study and their role differently, employing their preferred research methods and priorities in pursuing the research aims. For instance:

- Each involved a parent who acted as a gatekeeper but did so differently. Some largely delegated the task of taking visual images and engaged the support of parents in three-way discussions of their data, whilst others took command of the iPad and discussed their data with me independently
- Some primarily generated their data through visual images including mind mapping and others through discussion and/or invitations for me to join in with them or observe activities
- All coresearchers engaged with me to analyse their data, grouping visual images under descriptive headings. Some continued with analysis to independently develop their own story of their free-choice pursuits, whilst others critiqued narratives which I drafted for them and Harry finished before synthesising his collected data into an overview story.

Coresearcher engagement in the research process is reviewed in Chapter 8, as part of the review of the effectiveness of the AChiG participatory methodology to increase insight into children's lived experiences of physical activity.

5.8.3 The revealing of external/environmental factors influencing coresearchers' physical activity choices

Whilst I focused upon foregrounding the coresearcher experiences, I also detected potential themes in coresearchers' data which revealed factors shaping coresearchers' choices external to their self-determined motivations. Strikingly the factors shaping coresearchers' choices appeared consistently in reflexive memos during analysis e.g. Reflexive thinking 20, Reflexive thinking 24.

A combination of what coresearchers expressed about their physical activity choices and reflexive memos together revealed partly formed descriptors of factors which appeared to influence coresearchers' choices of physical activity comprising:

180205 MEM ANA Early reflection on data

Walk: Thinking about data on a study break from preparing BG's story of her research. How the initial feeling that co-researchers appeared to each strongly like time with parents in their free choice time and how this played out in different ways. Parental influence on the children's choice of activities, their apparent enjoyment in the activity appears strong across the sample albeit different in each case.

Could the relationship with parents; parental choices about how to spend family time; the influence that the co-researchers are allowed/given within the family; the context of the family (older or younger siblings to think about or not etc.) be the common thread?

Early data familiarisation is suggesting that it is not simply about parents as role models.

Bronfenbrenner's socioecological layers of influence focusing upon the parental influence could provide a framework for understanding how children develop their physically active selves.

Operationalising environments in which children may choose physically active pursuits would provide for and engage parents. Parents can:

- *Structure children's physical activity away and apart from the home and family*
- *Embrace children's physical activity within the home and family routines*

What am I seeing in terms of the children's experience; associations with being active – 'sent off to a course/club' to return home to somewhere separate or engaged with the rest of the family? Keep thinking!!

- Influence of family members, particularly parents and grandparents
- Family circumstances
- Impact of school
- Opportunities for physical activity

A number of these factors had been revealed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2) framed as socioecological and sociocultural factors impacting children's participation in physical activity. For instance, the increasing family circumstance of busy working parents leading to children spending increased time in structured activities outside the home as a form of childcare (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018); the impact of PESS on children's free time activity

Reflexive thinking 19: Early reflection on data

choices (Chen and Hynar, 2015; Fairlough *et al.*, 2016). Simultaneously, reflexive memos particularly associated with the agency of coresearchers and their choices drew me to reflect upon the role of family and parents as facilitators and influencers of coresearchers' choices (e.g. Reflexive thinking boxes 20 and 21). Coresearchers foregrounded the draw to choose pursuits that enabled them to engage with family

members in their theme 'Time with family'. However, family and family circumstances were key factors instrumental in coresearchers' other themes. For instance, in Harry's mother finding a trampoline club where he could master Parkour flips; Harry, Gareth and Danny's parents/grandparents encouraging and facilitating them joining football Academies; Reilly's access to a wide range of physical activity pursuits due to her father's job and encouraged in her creative pursuits by her mother.

170527 MEM ANA: Agency and choice of activities – extract

The concept of the co-researchers' environments being 'adult time rich' or not is of interest. It adds another dimension to the concept of parental influence on coresearcher's leisure time pursuit choices. Firstly parental time to engage with / be engaged by co-researchers in their leisure time pursuits; secondly the disposition/beliefs of parents as physically active role models and/or with positive attitudes towards the children enjoying physically active lifestyles; thirdly and pragmatically the resources (of time and/or money) that parents have to facilitate the coresearchers' chosen leisure time activities. These factors interplay in complex ways. On the one hand two coresearchers make their leisure activity choices with relatively low financial support available but with relatively high adult-rich-time investment and support to engage in weekly recreational swimming and park outings; regular physically active outdoor-based family holidays and coresearchers able to choose their out of school clubs and activities with relatively high levels of agency. On the other hand, two coresearchers who benefit from relatively higher financial circumstances spend longer in structured school hours starting school earlier in the morning and staying for tea and then prep at school until 6pm with Saturday morning school in one case. This results in more limited agency and free choice leisure time with requirements to attend a club or activity. Interestingly both coresearchers in conversation elicited by discussion of Fitbit readings described Sundays during term time as recovery days when they did not have commitments or plan to do things (Ref: Discussion with IA and with VS). This was reinforced by the Mums. This latter picture supports literature which reports the increased structuring of children's lives. (Get references).

Reflexive thinking 20: Adult time-richness, agency and choice of PA

Simultaneously, other socioecological and sociocultural factors prevalent in the Literature Review (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5), including gender, culture/race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status/class were not consistently highlighted by coresearchers' data. For instance, Danny's ethnic minority origins contributed positively to his cultural interest in Bhangra Dance but did not detract from his participation in a full range of extra-curricular and community sports alongside his peers. Jay did not fulfil the stereotype of a 'sporty' boy. Simultaneously, Reilly was very clear about the unfairness of the way she saw girls subjected to gender stereotyping, but this gave her increased determination to participate in a full range of activities. Meanwhile, Beach girl, Georgia, IAgwwP, and Vixen Swift each participated in a range of different formal and informal sports and activities. In foregrounding family circumstances coresearchers referred to the availability of resources and parental time to support their choices of activities and the family activities in which

they engaged. However, the influence of family in terms of social and psychosocial bonding appeared to mediate each of these other factors.

In Section 4.4.' Research methodology' and Figure 4 'Schematic to show the researcher and coresearchers role in the AChiG model', I outlined how the AChiG model for participatory research accommodates the opportunity for the researcher to reflect further upon the coresearchers' data and the coresearcher/researcher collaborative findings. The coresearcher and researcher completing the research journey differentially with the coresearcher drawing on previous research and theoretical frameworks to help in illuminating findings. The integrity of a child-guided study is maintained through a continuing focus upon coresearchers' own expression of their experiences within their data. I was reminded at this point of the study of my determination not to focus upon external factors impacting coresearchers' experiences (e.g. see Reflexive thinking 21). I

wished to focus upon revealing rich descriptions of coresearchers' experiences of their chosen physical activities which might better inform practitioners about children's preferences for being active. That

170307 PRO MEM Questions for the data extract

What is the data telling me about the children's EXPERIENCE of physical activity?

Reflexive thinking 21: Extract memo focusing analysis

determination was evidenced in an early adjustment in my approach to coding data (181205 MEM NVivo screen grab to show re-structured connecting with codes) where I had started to group inductive codes under the working research questions. After a short while in doing so I was potentially reverting to a deductive style of coding i.e. seeking themes in data which answered the research questions rather than allowing themes to be generated from the data.

Notwithstanding, potential themes describing influences on coresearchers' physical activity choices were revealed in coresearchers' own data about their physical activity experiences, some foregrounded such as 'Time with Family' but others not; such as 'Impact of school'. The revelation of these socio-cultural factors outside coresearchers' control contributed to the final shaping of the study's research questions.

5.8.4 The final research questions

The coresearcher focus in the inquiry was reflected in the final review of the study's research questions shown at the end of this chapter. The ordering of research questions foregrounded coresearchers' interests, starting with the overview research question about what coresearchers chose to do and what this revealed about their experiences of physical activity.

The first two research questions then explored how the coresearchers conceptualised physical activity within their chosen pursuits (RQ1) and then the essence of their lived experience of their physical activity (RQ2) as reflected in their data. These questions shaped the key findings and outcomes of research in which coresearchers were most interested, and which were reflected in their stories of their free-time pursuits.

The final question reflected my additional interest, about how coresearchers' experiences might inform policy and practice for the provision of opportunities for 7 to 11 years old children to be physically active. The introduction to the study sets out the problem of the failure of Public Sport, Health and Education policy makers and practitioners to improve sub-optimal levels of children's physical activity for good health and well-being in England. This interest was reflected in the early iterations of the study's research questions at the end of Chapter 2: Literature Review in RQ3; Chapter 3: Developing a Theoretical Framework, RQ2 and emerging themes in coresearchers' data which appeared to describe factors influencing their choices of physical activity (see Chapter 5: Findings, Section 5.8.3). Those factors appeared to support existing research which focused upon socioecological approaches to explaining children's physical activity behaviours, highlighting factors within the family setting, the wider community and policy agenda influencing children's physical activity opportunities (see Chapter 2: Literature Review, Section 2.5). This recommended a socioecological approach focusing the research lens upon what coresearchers' had expressed in their own data about factors influencing their free-choice activities. The exploration of socio-cultural factors which impacted the coresearchers' physical activity choices and experiences might highlight barriers and

facilitators associated with coresearchers' choices and experiences. Identifying factors which influenced the structuring and experience of coresearchers' chosen physical activity might help to inform family, community and/or policy practices which could nurture and facilitate increased participation in their chosen physical activities.

The final revised research questions provide the framework for the discussion of findings.

Research aim:

To investigate the lived experiences of physical activity in middle childhood children's free-choice pursuits, and to explore whether working towards a new child-guided participatory research approach might assist in revealing new insights

Research questions:

RQ1. How did coresearchers conceptualise physical activity within their chosen pursuits?

RQ2. What was the essence of the experience of coresearchers' chosen physical activities, their perceptions and beliefs about physical activity and meanings they invested in those pursuits?

RQ3. What were the socioecological factors which impacted upon the structuring and experience of physical activity?

6 Discussion of Findings: How coresearchers experienced physical activity

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I address the first two research questions set out at the close of the last chapter, to describe the way in which coresearchers structured and then experienced physical activity in their free choice pursuit. Investigating how coresearchers structured their physical activity was rooted in the study's ontological position (set out in Chapter 3) that physical activity was individually socially constructed and that coresearchers had agency and choice in shaping their activities. I asked the following questions of the coresearchers' data in each of the themes to describe how coresearchers structured their physical activity:

- What did the coresearchers reveal about how they conceptualised physical activity in what they chose to do?
- What were the key characteristics of coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity?

These insights then helped me to address the second research question at the heart of this phenomenological study: to describe the essence of the experience of coresearchers' chosen pursuits. To do this I revisited the inductive analysis of coresearchers' data as a whole and used the themes identified in Figure 17 to further develop understanding about coresearchers' experiences in their data. This process generated additional themes, and provided freshly nuanced understandings about existing themes, which are captured schematically at the start of Section 6.5 where I address the second research question.

I addressed the second research question drawing upon the data revealed by the way coresearchers structured their physical activities. Inspired by Vixen Swift's story of her free choice pursuits, I prepared a brief vignette for each coresearcher, as far as possible

using coresearchers' own expression of their experiences to foreground their lived experience. The chapter concludes with a brief review of frequently recurring characteristics of the way coresearchers experienced physical activity.

6.1.1 Addressing coresearchers' agency to structure their chosen pursuits

In addressing this research question, I acknowledged that 7 to 11 years old children within UK society do not have full agency to manage all aspects of their lives and choices. For instance, at 7 to 11 years of age, none of my coresearchers were allowed to roam away from home unaccompanied by a supervising adult. Coresearchers were each reliant upon their parents and upon home-based space and time to facilitate their free-choice pursuits. Existing research sets out the importance of parental support (Mackintosh *et al.*, 2011; Gilliland *et al.*, 2015); space and equipment (Rasmussen, 2004; Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2007); and the availability of specialist facilities for specific sports and activities (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015); as key factors shaping children's participation in sport and physical activity.

However, coresearchers did have some agency and choice. Each coresearcher had regular daily periods in which they could choose from a range of active or inactive pursuits in their homes, gardens and other safe spaces when free of school and other family/community obligations. Coresearchers negotiated with parents/carers to choose what they did. Parents frequently facilitated coresearchers to join clubs, for instance Harry's Mother enrolled him on trampoline club when he expressed a wish to improve his Parkour skills. Activities on family outings were negotiated, for instance Beach Girl and Jay generally persuaded their parents to visit a

170309 FIELD MEM F/M BG&JAY
General observation positive role modelling from Mum

Mum is a driving force behind much or most of the activities through her natural role modelling and deliberate design e.g organised the children to trick or treating locally along the street, deliberately plans to get the children out each weekend to visit one or other of their favourite parks, and takes swimming every Saturday.

Lots of outdoor park walks and focus on including a playground area with climbing frames and equipment for Jay and BG. Mum critical of local parks where equipment has been taken away or has low play value for the children.

Frequent picnics

Reflexive thinking 22: Parental role modelling and support for PA

playground with climbing equipment when they went on regular country walks.

Coresearchers had agency to withdraw from activities. Several coresearchers gave up swimming lessons at the earliest opportunity and Danny did not share his Father's enthusiasm to play cricket. Coresearchers also demonstrated agency in the way in which they participated in pursuits structured by others; 'children influence their parents – and the ways they parent – as much as the other way around' (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018, p. 228). Coresearchers created their own activity within family activities, often powered by their imaginations, for instance re-enacting video game-based adventures during walks or challenging themselves to climb trees and ford streams.

I chose not to dwell further on the generalities of agency in middle childhood, because this study focused on the lived experiences of a specific group of coresearchers and I wanted to focus on their specific experiences, including any limitations they perceived in structuring/ conceptualising their physical activities. The inductive analysis of coresearchers' own data generated themes which revealed a range of socioecological factors impacting coresearchers' physical activities. These themes are discussed in Chapter 7, where I specifically address why it might be that coresearchers structured and experienced physical activity in the way that I outline in this chapter. Firstly, therefore I consider how coresearchers structured/conceptualised physical activity within their chosen pursuits and then move onto why that might have been.

6.2 RQ1 How did coresearchers conceptualise their chosen pursuits?

Section 5.8 set out the broad range of free-choice pursuits coresearchers collectively demonstrated in their data and inductively analysed themes (Mastering activities; Identity; Creativity; Time with family; Chilling, play and fun) which described their pursuits. Data from within these themes revealed the way that coresearchers structured/conceptualised their chosen pursuits.

Impact of time, space and context

Coresearchers' choices of pursuits were shaped by the coresearchers' prevailing circumstances, space and time. Each coresearcher conceptualised their activities differently. For instance, after school clubs were a daily part of Vixen Swift's extended school day which most days already involved PE or games. Her choices of clubs were generally physically inactive, and she appeared to perceive her after school time as time to socialise, relax or be creative with crafting activities rather than a time to be active. This experience is reminiscent of the body of inconclusive studies investigating the impact of PESS on children's overall physical activity levels. Vixen Swift's need to be physically active appeared to be satiated by her physical activity in school reflecting findings that children are not necessarily encouraged by PESS to be more active out of school (Magnusson *et al.*, 2011; Møller *et al.*, 2014; Fairclough *et al.*, 2016).

Meanwhile, other coresearchers experienced PE or games at most twice a week. Danny and Reilly took part in every opportunity to engage in extra-curricular sports before and after the school day and were also active in a range of community sports possibly reflecting those studies that found PESS could encourage children to be more active out of school (Alderman *et al.*, 2012; Chen and Hypnar, 2015).

The remaining coresearchers tended to leave the school environment as soon as lessons were over. Nonetheless they were amongst four coresearchers who reported bouncing on their garden trampoline as the first thing they liked to do upon getting home. At these moments for these coresearchers, physical activity was a way of regenerating mental and physical energies after the discipline of being contained and concentrating within the classroom. Their physical activity was characterised by active play in creative, imaginative movement (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018) focused upon fun (Bergen, 2009; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2012).

The same coresearchers chose different activities when cared for after school by grandparents at homes which were equipped for different activities for instance encouraging Reilly's crafting activities, perhaps reflecting the positive impact of the

availability of equipment for physical activity on coresearchers' choices seen in school playtime studies (Barbour, 1999; Pawlowski *et al.*, 2016).

Family time particularly holidays were characterised by novel physical activity experiences, engaging with novel equipment and spaces, (particularly the outdoors) in time with parents that was not normally available. These experiences appear to support studies which demonstrated the positive impact of novel equipment (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Plowright, 2015) and outdoor nature-based activities (Clements, 2004; Sanders, Feng, Paul P. Fahey, *et al.*, 2015) on children's physical activity levels.

Fluidity in pursuit choices

Each coresearcher chose both physically active and inactive pursuits; each in different proportion. For instance, Reilly appeared equally content to immerse herself in a wide range of different arts and crafts as well as physical activities. Jay engaged in highly active creative and imaginative play but would also become absorbed in extended periods of computer gaming. Most of Danny's chosen pursuits were structured sports activities.

Inactive pursuits were strongly associated with screen-based activities particularly scanning YouTube videos; playing computer games; taking and manipulating selfies but also watching TV. However, coresearchers also included make-believe play; a wide range of arts and crafts; reading and writing stories; and additional educational experiences from learning to play an instrument to School University club.

Whilst the focus of this study was upon coresearchers' physically active experiences, coresearchers did not structure or conceptualise their choice of pursuits in terms of periods of activity or inactivity. Active and inactive pursuits co-existed and influenced one another demonstrating many of the features of 'free play' described by Glenn *et.al.* (2012) for instance:

- Active and inactive pursuits shared and often competed for the same limited time and space coresearchers had available to pursue free choice pursuits, highlighting

the challenges of children's increasingly structured time (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018)

- Physically inactive pursuits stimulated interest in participating in sports/physical activities and vice versa. For instance, Danny expressed interest in learning a martial art prompted by playing a wrestling computer game. Conversely, coresearchers liked to read about or followed screen-based entertainment associated with their physical activities, which included football, netball and horse riding
- Coresearchers played out screen-based adventure scenarios from favourite computer games and Parkour coverage on social media and set themselves skill-based challenges based on their viewing
- Physically inactive pursuits could suddenly and spontaneously mutate into vigorous activity. Socialising could become physical. For instance, Xtreme Camp rest breaks broke into rough and tumble play.

These features were reminiscent of the pilot school playtime study, in which co-created games of tag would suddenly erupt from excited social gatherings in the playground (Plowright, 2017). In the holiday play scheme pilot, a small group sustained a physically inactive, imaginative game of shop deliveries pushing around toy lorries. However, every so often they transferred the activity to ride-on cars upon which they raced to deliver goods first (Plowright, 2015). There was spontaneity and fluidity between and within different sorts of pursuits. Such activity episodes resulted in raised affective state enjoyment providing 'circuit(s) of body-reflexive pleasures' (Wellard, 2012, p. 26) and flow sources of enjoyment (Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015).

Gendered differences in choice and how coresearchers structured their pursuits

Whilst a small and unrepresentative group, gendered patterns appeared across coresearchers' choices and how they conceptualised their physical activity. Horse riding and/or playing with and caring for family dogs featured in four female coresearchers' activity choices, but not in any of the male coresearcher's choices or aspirations. This

could have been completely coincidental and due to a range of external factors about the space, time and other resources available to each family, and/or the accessibility of opportunities. However this finding may also reflect an extension of findings in some research that girls have a greater interest in physical activities which have a stronger social aspect (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015). This was reflected in the school playtime study, which highlighted inactive social play amongst girls discussing and sharing their growing families of toys. There was no parallel in the boys' playtime pursuits, which were all highly physically active (Plowright, 2017).

Georgia indicated, after her decision to give up riding following her fall, that her interest in horse riding was as much about caring for the ponies as it was mastering riding. She planned to volunteer as a non-riding stable girl when old enough and vicariously enjoyed the connection with horses through leisure reading. Vixen Swift also indicated that bonding with the ponies she rode was important to her, although she remained determined to master the skills of horse riding. For instance, Vixen Swift highlighted her enjoyment of riding open days, when participants groomed and decorated their ponies. She was similarly dedicated to her family dog who was central to many family walks. On one occasion she drew me into discussion about how we thought her dog viewed her in his world. Playing with a family dog and connecting with horses demonstrated source of fun and enjoyment often linked with outdoor and nature-based physical activity (Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2008).

The choice of inactive arts and crafts pursuits was also more prevalent in female coresearchers' data than in male coresearchers. Jay went so far as to reject data referring to his crafting, gardening and baking pursuits in his story about his choice of pursuits (See Appendix X). Bhangra dance, which was intrinsically artistic and creative, was described by Danny only in terms of the precision, hard work and practice required to perform it well. However this gendered difference was not reflective of the holiday play scheme pilot, when neither boys nor girls tended to choose inactive pursuits, even though a range of

arts and crafts and screen based activities were equally available as a whole range of indoor or outdoor sports and informal physical activities (Plowright, 2015).

Conversely, organised team sports, particularly football, dominated male coresearchers' chosen pursuits, with the exception of Jay who viewed both football and rugby as uncomfortable and potentially harmful. Jay's response to team games supported research findings that some boys could find competitive sports uncomfortable or intimidating (Mandigo and Holt, 2002; Huang and Gao, 2008) and could withdraw themselves from structured games and competitive spaces (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015). Only one of the five female coresearchers, Georgia, expressed an interest in regularly playing a competitive structured sport outside of school. Furthermore, Reilly actively challenged what she perceived as a general conceptualisation of organised sports being a male domain. She expressed a wish that she had been born a boy because boys didn't "get judged" for wishing to take part in organised sport. She challenged the boys on her Xtreme camp, initiated rough and tumble and contended that girls were just as capable as boys of participating in any activity they wished. Only she and one other classmate joined in informal football games with the boys in school lunchtimes, which I observed during the school playtime pilot study. Girls were welcomed to play however; the vast majority did not consider taking part. These experiences supported research which highlighted early gender differences in sports participation (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015) and evidence of gender stereotyping forming barriers to participation for many girls (Slater and Tiggemann, 2011). However, Reilly was an example of a skilled girl who could 'throw themselves into the games and spaces dominated by boys' (Pawlowski *et al.*, 2015, p. 285).

Coresearchers experienced a common PE curriculum which promoted participation in the same sports equally to girls and boys. School sport programmes supported and developed competitive participation in sports. Vixen Swift's and IA's private schools embedded games or PE into almost every school day, with compulsory membership of at least one school team and match play in weekly games afternoons. However, these experiences were not translated into equal opportunities out of school to choose to

participate in team sports. Georgia was keen for instance to join her Mother who coached and played netball, a traditionally female sport, but had to wait until she was 12 years old to join. My visits to each of the male coresearchers' community football matches reflected the same imbalance in participation. It was extremely unusual for a team to have girl players. In her comments Reilly highlighted a structural and systemic gendered imbalance in provision for her to participate in team sports.

However, other gendered differences were not attributable to structural/systemic imbalances. For instance, each of the male coresearchers were interested in pursuing adventurous activities such as climbing, canoeing and paddle boarding and two directly translated screen based adventure viewing into actively trying out Parkour moves re-enacting computer games. None of the female coresearchers took direct inspiration from computer games and YouTube videos to structure their physical activities, even though they had the same access to these sources. Reilly and IA took part in adventurous active play, which included Ringoing (an entry activity to water skiing), climbing and body boarding, but were more measured in their approaches to adventurous play. Georgia compared herself as less daring than her younger brother in trying out water sports in the cold. These findings connected with research suggesting boys found enjoyment more readily than girls in the physicality and effort of participation (Butt *et al.*, 2011).

Physical activity conceptualised as active play and as mastery of activity

Notwithstanding the individuality and fluidity of experiences, a pattern was generated from coresearchers' data which revealed two conceptualisations of physical activity. One was characterised by key features of active play, the other by key features of the mastery of activities. These conceptualisations were not mutually exclusive but sat at either end of a continuum. At one end of the continuum, active play was self-determined, unstructured and intrinsically enjoyable; undertaken for the purpose of having fun supporting widely shared definitions of active play in research literature (Bergen, 2009; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2012; Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018) and also intrinsic conceptions of enjoyment associated with affective states, embodied and flow state physicality

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015) . At the other end of the continuum, mastery of activity was characterised by structured sport and activities led by coaches and instructors, with a focus upon competition and/or becoming more skilled or competent to participate. Fun and enjoyment were also important but were associated with external/extrinsic rather than intrinsic rewards of participation. This included a sense of achievement, recognition as a strong performer and fulfilment of aspirations to be identified with high/higher levels performance associated with sources of enjoyment from a sense of achievement and mastery often explained by self-determination theory in the literature (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007a; Walters *et al.*, 2015).

Further conceptualisations could be placed on the continuum between these two extremes. For instance, the first pilot study identified 5-10 years old research participants in their holiday play scheme participating in sports conceptualised as 'playing at' a sport or physical activity. 'Playing at' comprised playing a recognisable sport such as badminton or football, using many of the skills of the game, but with rules children amended to make playing more fun (Plowright, 2015).

This highlighted another example of the fluidity of coresearchers' experiences in the way they conceptualised physical activity. Coresearchers started to participate in a pursuit with one motivation, for instance as active play, but were drawn into the lived experience of the activity prompting a wish to master skills/movements or overall participation in an activity. This, for instance, described Harry's journey from his garden trampoline to joining trampoline club. The reverse also happened when several coresearchers eagerly gave up swimming classes but continued to look forward to swimming recreationally as part of their holiday enjoyment. Jay for instance was particularly eager to give up swimming lessons, but the opportunity to practice his made up Grand Theft Auto swimming was a key feature of his holiday fun.

Changes in the way coresearchers took part in activities were often spontaneous and in the moment of being active. Reilly for instance was experienced in rock climbing and had mastered the skills to scale the indoor wall on her Brownie outing. After her first adept

climb, she became stuck half-way and simply stepped off the wall to be lowered down whilst she entertained her friends with a regal wave. She moved seamlessly from practising the skills of climbing to enjoying the movement experiences of the activity to 'play at' climbing and connect with her friends at the same time.

6.3 Physical Activity conceptualised as active play

Figure 18 is extracted from Figure 17 to show the inductively analysed themes ('Chilling, Play and Fun' associated with 'Creativity' and 'Time with family') generated from data

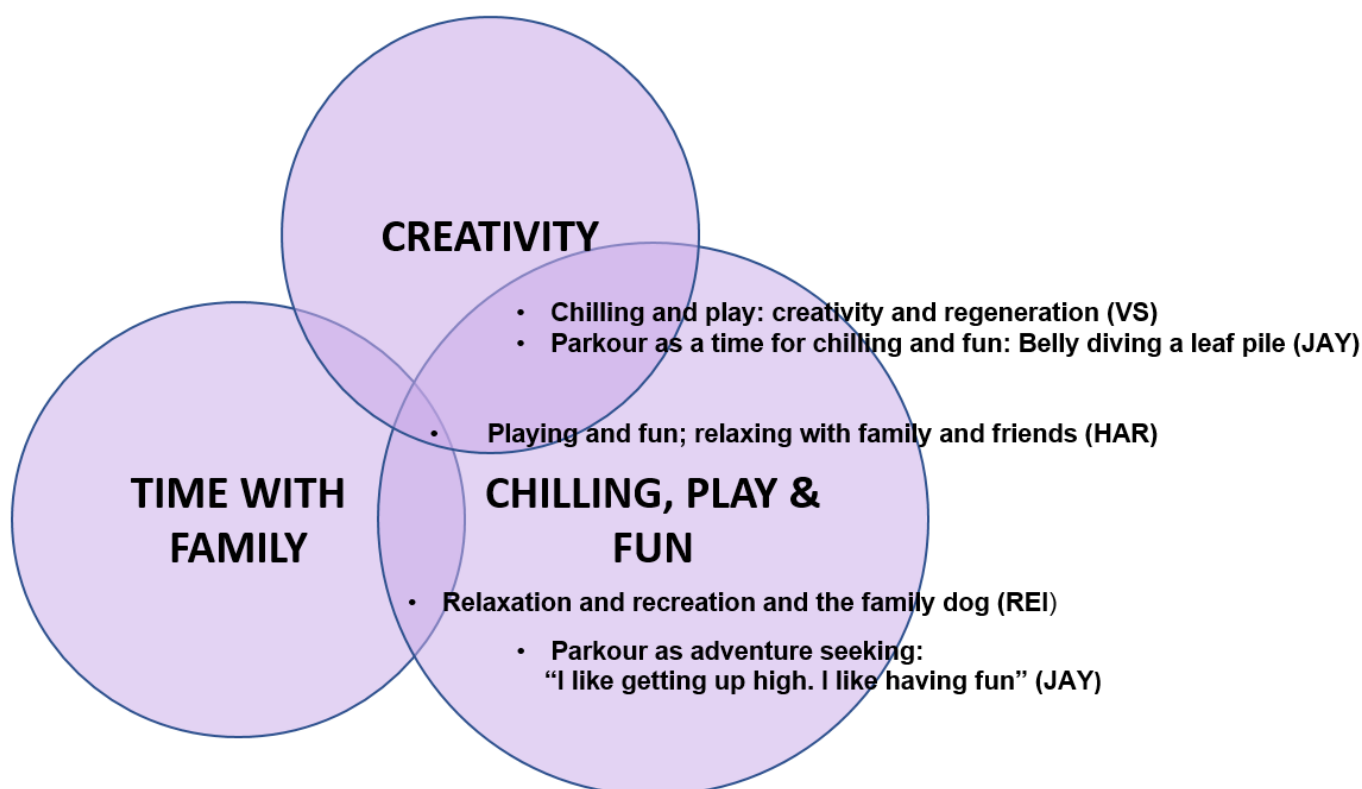


Figure 18 Coresearchers' headings associated with active play themes coresearchers described under headings associated with active play.

The study deliberately focused upon coresearchers' free-choice physical activities to differentiate the investigation from research about children's compulsory PE&SS. Physical activity presented by coresearchers in their data was very likely, therefore, to demonstrate the key characteristics generally supported to describe play as autonomous, self-directed

activity for the purpose of fun and enjoyment, without immediate or delayed external/extrinsic reward (Brockman, Fox and Jago, 2011; Holt *et al.*, 2013).

Coresearchers used the terms 'playing' and 'having fun' synonymously to describe physical activity. Active play was associated with 'playtime' and the conceptualisation of time and space that provided coresearchers freedom to choose what they did. For instance, home and garden was conceptualised as play space; before and after school, weekends and holidays as 'play time'. In other words, physical activity associated with those times and spaces tended to be perceived as play and physical activity was for fun.

Physical activity conceptualised as active play could include almost any activity, as long as it fulfilled the commonly supported conditions for play as freely chosen, self-directed and pursued for its own self, for fun (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018). For instance, Beach Girl enjoyed gardening not only in her voluntary after school club but also at home where she grew flowers and vegetables in a small greenhouse. Her brother, Jay however did not find this fun and rejected data showing himself planting and cultivating for his final story of chosen pursuits Appendix X. This supported the conceptualisation of active play as a psychological or emotional state – a playful approach - which coresearchers brought to their activities, rather than as specific activities themselves.

Features of Chilling, Play and Fun as active play

Coresearchers' data within the theme of 'Chilling, play and having fun' was strongly associated with active play. Activities were self-determined, often unstructured, spontaneous and co-created with a special friend or family member in real-time. The majority of active play was associated with garden and home-based activity, which hosted:

- Made-up games stimulated by specialist activity equipment such as garden trampolines and soccer goals
- Games and play which manipulated the environment and household paraphernalia for construction play, such as building shelters and climbing piles of stored fencing

- 'Playing at' soccer, for instance using practice drills to create games and personal challenges such as cross-bar challenge
- Free-flowing unstructured activities, such as water fights and tag games with family and special friends

This eclectic mix of activities supported the description of children's perceptions of play reported in the literature review as a state of mind as much as any activity in itself (Brockman, Fox and Jago, 2011; Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018).

Active play also took place during outdoor family outings and holidays and selected holiday activities, such as Forest School and Xtreme camps. In these spaces / times coresearchers could roam relatively freely and had choice over their activity. Adults acted as facilitators to coresearchers' chosen activity, rather than leaders of structured games. Holidays and family outings were times when coresearchers sampled new and novel activities, such as water sports and water flumes, maximising opportunities to experience different outdoor environments including lakes, sea and beaches. Novel experiences were a source of enjoyment, giving rise to positive affective states from new or novel movement sensations such as riding water flumes. This finding supported findings from the holiday play scheme pilot, which identified the novelty of play equipment not normally available to children, such as a bouncy castle and ride-on cars, as motivators of physical activity (Plowright, 2015). Positive affective states were increased when coresearchers were in the company of close family/special friends, for instance, trying to master balancing on paddle boards or steer kayaks together with parents added to coresearchers' enjoyment. The presence and participation of parents in these situations built upon studies reporting the positive impact of friends and supportive parents on children's participation in school and community sports (Coulter and Woods, 2011; Kubayi, Toriola and Monyeki, 2013) but also appeared to impact more deeply. Physical activity was an opportunity for social bonding with parents and close family (Na, 2012).

Coresearchers associated chilling with play and fun. Chilling described a mental and emotional state that allowed the coresearcher to set aside responsibilities such as school-

work or family chores. This time could be inactive and restful or physically active. It was reminiscent of the juxtaposed states of 'activity and tenseness, and one of break and stillness' described by Wehner et.al.. Vixen Swift described sofa Sundays with her iPad as chilling and relief from long school days and weeks; whilst Reilly described running about playing with her family dog as chilling.

Chilling carried overtones of popular culture, suggesting a relaxation of formal mainstream behaviours and doing something deliberately different and novel. Some popular chilling activities were initiated and sustained by social media. Harry's interest in water bottle flipping was stimulated by YouTube coverage. Chilling was also an aspect of Parkour, situated in modern youth street culture made popular by social media. Watching Parkour videos prompted Harry to join trampoline club to hone his flips, and it so captured Jay's imagination that he associated each aspect of his physical activity as a form of Parkour. Parkour for Jay was adventure seeking and a way to chill and have fun making up creative body moves. Several coresearchers specifically referenced activities as chilling by integrating popular and culturally understood signs and poses, such as "dabs", into their activities and as celebrations. Their enjoyment emanated from using their bodies as creative instruments which Nielsen and Rowe (2012) observed in Danish children's experiences of dance education in schools.

The suspension of normal behaviour was accompanied by humour and especially embodied humour. This phenomenon was captured in the school playtime pilot and termed "silliness". Silliness was first identified and framed by the teacher of the 7-8 year old pilot study participants, when she settled the class back to lessons by reminding them that there was no room for silliness in the classroom. Silliness belonged in the playground. Silliness was thereby characterised as freedom from regulated behaviour for instance as perceived by children in a study of their school playtime (Brockman, Fox and Jago, 2011) or as part of PE lessons which provided time for refreshment and a break from academic studies (Na, 2012). It described excited, spontaneous active play, which engaged others in shared humour accompanied by noise and high levels of energy. It could be physically

demonstrated in rough and tumble, imaginative play such as re-enacting Star Wars adventures or in creative performances designed to amuse and entertain others. For instance, in performing selfies mid-jump from school play equipment. Silliness appeared again in the main study in coresearchers' data in themes 'Time with family' and 'Creativity'.

Creativity and Chilling, Play & Fun

Coresearchers conceptualised active play as a creative enterprise, which was manifested in a number of ways:

- In the nature of chosen activities as artistic and/or creative, often as humorous dramatic performances to entertain family and close friends, for instance taking "slomo" (slow motion) videos, performing selfies and striking poses whilst bouncing on the trampoline
- As imaginative play for instance replicating computer game adventures; leaping from rock to rock on the beach; and building or constructing forest shelters or human traps in the woods
- As self-imposed movement challenges through playground equipment; fording streams outdoors on a makeshift rope; navigating made-up challenges on playground equipment
- As a personal characteristic, for instance, Georgia appeared to value creativity as both an intellectual asset in her story writing and a social asset associated with her selfie performances on the trampoline, encouraging her friends' view of her as imaginative, "crazy and fun." (Appendix VIII)

Coresearchers' use of imagination fuelled creative outcomes and exploited sources of fun which were socially/emotionally rooted in a) embodied creative movement experiences and b) humour and teasing. Creativity in movements and made-up games was associated with performing to an audience, which generally comprised family or close friends. This could develop into audience participation as co-created shared novel movement, for

instance when Harry engaged his friend to join him bouncing and trying to avoid crushing teddy bears placed on the trampoline bed, which he described with much amusement.

Enjoyment of creative active play was expressed in laughter, positive gestures and body language; and verbalised as having fun and feeling good. Coresearchers also recognised the imagination and creativity that underpinned these activities, for instance Vixen Swift referred to the data containing selfie activity as full of “strange” stuff. Coresearchers consciously used their imaginations to construct active play. The enjoyment of active play was amplified when connecting with close family members in shared laughter and movement sensations, such as co-created double bouncing challenges to experience kickbacks from the trampoline. Features of coresearchers’ creative physical activity for the purposes of chilling, playing and fun reaffirmed descriptions in studies of home/family based free play (Bergen, 2009; Glenn, Knight and Holt, 2012). Sources of enjoyment reflected findings from the literature highlighting positive affective state enjoyment, enhanced mood and emotions that can emanate from moderate activity (Tomik, Olex-Zarychta and Mynarski, 2012; Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015).

Time with Family and Chilling, Play and Fun

Physical activity as a family was often facilitated by parents in response to coresearchers’ requests as treats, such as birthday outings and successful pester-power. For instance, Jay’s and Beach Girl’s requests to visit playgrounds were generally successful after a family walk.

Inductive analysis revealed that coresearchers were doing more than just socialising as part of their physical activity choices. Active play was associated with time with immediate/close family. These were important moments for making memories integral to family bonding (Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2008; Pomfret and Varley, 2019). It was a time in which coresearchers built social/emotional connections with family members. For instance, six coresearchers talked about enjoying playing with younger cousins and featured themselves with family toddlers in a variety of play settings, including ball parks

and on climbing equipment at home and in garden play. The strongest connections being made through active play were with parents but included grandparents. For instance, Jay looked forward to teaching his Grandfather to play lava monsters when they were next on a walk. All coresearchers included data showing activities with parents which were characterised by shared family humour, teasing and silliness.

‘Silliness’ associated with family involved teasing linked to close and trusted bonds within family relationships, with whom coresearchers shared particular understandings and humour. Examples were visible in every coresearcher’s data illustrating times when:

- Coresearchers and parents were mutually engaged in active play as a relief from their day-to-day obligations of school and paid employment respectively. For instance, Harry and his Mother engaged in garden water fights; Danny’s Father initiated play fights to tumble Danny off the two person paddle board they were sharing
- Parents encouraged activities as an appreciative audience; admiring and being entertained by coresearchers’ performances, as seen in BG and Jay’s parents encouraging them in their acrobatics through playground equipment
- Coresearchers engaged parents in their activities, as when Vixen Swift persuaded her Father to join in diva selfie performances
- Active play bonded parents and coresearchers in joint enjoyment and set down positive physical activity memories, which the coresearchers highlighted in their data and sought to repeat. For instance, Jay and BG’s outdoor play activities through mud and flood water were aided and abetted by their Father demonstrating the challenge activities and restorative aspects of being outdoors cited by Flett et.al. (2010). Reilly’s Mother facilitated daily activities in holidays, cycling, walking and playing with the family dog.

Time to play with parents had a novelty value first identified in the holiday activity pilot study in the way children engaged adult leaders to facilitate their play activity. For instance, leaders were enlisted to lift and bounce children down onto the inflatable bouncy

castle; to make up football sides to help some play, and children found obvious delight in teasing leaders brought to their games. Coresearchers similarly engaged their parents and parents were seen encouraging and initiating fun activity such as water fights, pillow attack, giving piggy-back rides. This expanded the range and scope of coresearchers' play and gave rise to novel experiences.

Whereas existing research into PE and school sport highlighted the importance of friends as a key motivation to take part in physical activity (Allender, Cowburn and Foster, 2006; Agbuga, Xiang and McBride, 2012), coresearchers in this study rarely profiled friends as part of their active play. Reilly and Vixen Swift reported that having "nice" people with whom to participate in organised holiday activities made participation enjoyable, but these were friends they made at the activity.

With the exception of birthday celebrations, coresearchers generally only showed a particular special/best friend in their data, usually from their school class, with whom they spent relatively large amounts of time. Georgia, Reilly and Vixen Swift's activities with their best friends were characterised by creative dramatic selfie performances based on shared humour accompanied by high levels of excitement. Beach Girl meanwhile shared relatively inactive creative activities with her best friend, with much lower levels of excitement. Harry, Danny and Gareth's activities with friends were mostly associated with football skills practice and challenges.

Overview of physical activity as active play

In summary, coresearchers each engaged in physical activity as active play. Active play was conceptualised by coresearchers as time and space that was different to their structured and regulated day-to-day school lives. Active play was a way of celebrating and enjoying freedoms to choose what they could do and to express themselves.

Coresearchers' conceptualisations of free active play closely reflected children's experiences in existing research, widely described as a mental/emotional attitude that the

coresearchers took to an eclectic, free-flowing range of physical activities motivated by the seeking of fun and enjoyment. Active play was:

- An opportunity to break free from day to day directed and structured activities to regenerate social, emotional, physical and mental energies
- Time out from obligations of schooling, from traditional/disciplined ways of behaving; freedom to choose activities and freedom to behave in unfettered, unconventional ways

However, coresearchers also appeared to reveal nuances and emphases in their experiences which built upon existing studies. For instance, the intertwining of creativity and imagination, the embodiment and physicality of shared humour and enjoyment with the engagement of close family which provided more than an opportunity for socialising with parents. Active play was also:

- A physical, embodied way to have fun, share humour and humorous activity sometimes characterised by silliness leading to raised affective states
- Indulgence in novel and creative activities, driven by coresearchers' imaginations, fuelled by popular culture and social media as well as their individual enthusiasms
- Time spent living out and deepening social/emotional bonds with close family and occasionally special friends supporting Birchwood et.al. in their finding that the family environment was the primary factor in creating a disposition for physical activity (2008).

6.4 Physical activity conceptualised as mastery of activities

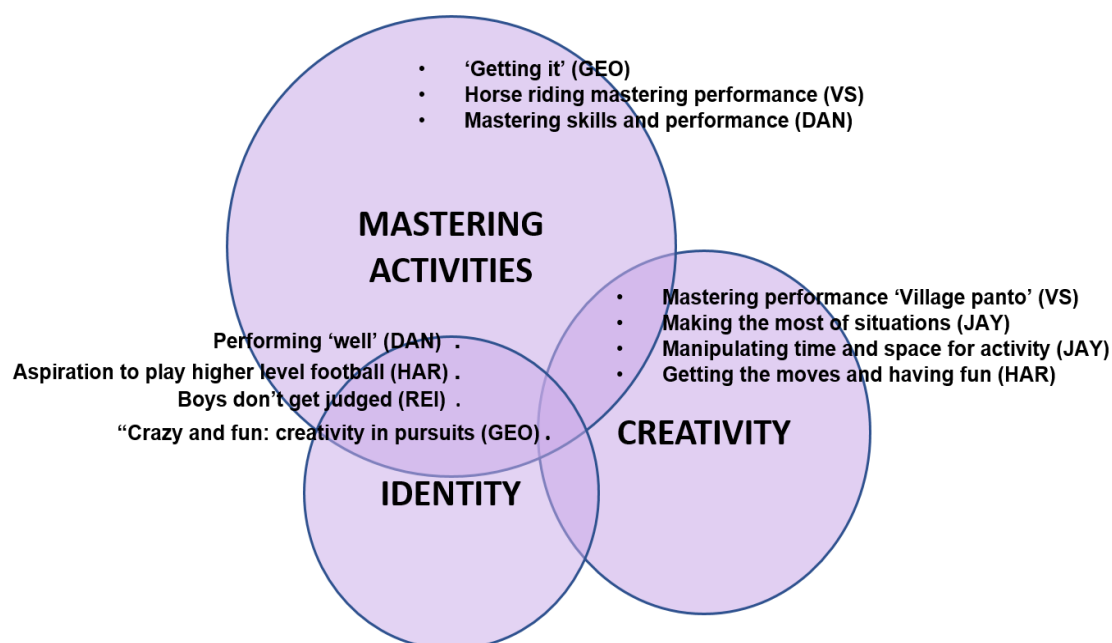


Figure 19 Coresearchers' headings associated with mastery activities

Figure 19 is extracted from Figure 17 to show themes which described coresearchers' data which conceptualised physical activity as mastery of activities. Like active play, activities associated with mastery were also associated with creativity. However, unlike active play coresearchers appeared to express their aspirations, values and beliefs and aspects of their personal identity in the structuring of their mastery activities.

Physical activity as mastery of activities was primarily experienced within structured community clubs or programmed activities led by adult coaches/instructors.

Coresearchers provided data about a wide and varied range of sports and physical activities focused upon mastering skills and/or competence to compete or perform. These comprised team sports which included football, rugby, netball and cheerleading to individual sports and activities such as competition swimming, Bhangra dance and physically active pursuits such as drama.

Some coresearchers engaged in physical activity focused upon mastery of activities outside structured sport/physical activity, by setting themselves personal skills and movement challenges. Danny's football skills training and Harry's practice to achieve

Parkour tricks on the trampoline were examples. This conceptualisation of physical activity as mastery was first seen in girls' playground gymnastics practices within the school play time pilot study.

Mastery activity was differentiated from active play by the sense of purpose coresearchers brought to the activity. The focus was upon mastery and good performance. Social aspects such as getting on and working hard for the team, sharing and playing well were important only in as much as this contributed to good performance.

Identity was associated with the enjoyment which coresearchers experienced from recognition for performing well; for instance, Harry, Gareth and Danny nurtured aspirations to join higher level football academy programmes, Georgia and Reilly were pleased to be selected for school sports teams. Coresearchers also expressed their identity aspects of their values and beliefs in the way in which they structured their physical activity choices. For instance, the values and beliefs Gareth and Danny brought from their community team experiences moderated their aspirations to pursue academy level football

Coresearchers linked enjoyment with mastery achieved through hard work, resilience and commitment; achievement as reward for hard work and sustained practice. This supported widely reported associations of fun and enjoyment from a sense of achievement (Mandigo and Holt, 2006; Light and Curry, 2007; McCarthy and Jones, 2007a),

Mastery of activities, hard work, resilience and commitment

Coresearchers committed high levels of time and energy to structured sport and physical activity associated with mastery activities. Harry, Danny, Gareth and Reilly had after school or community sports activities most school weekdays as well as weekend games or performances. Coresearchers also demonstrated strong engagement in technical understanding of their sports, for instance Danny focused upon the benefits that his whole range of activities brought to improve his footballing performance: Bhangra dance for development of stamina; nightly exercises for core strength and so on. Reilly explained

the coordinated roles of each member of her cheerleader team to keep her safe as the flyer and to build competent routines. Georgia and Vixen Swift were engaged by the challenge of remembering and coordinating multiple techniques of riding. Jay exhibited this same focus on the technicalities of movement challenges he set himself. For instance, he explained the precise placement of his hands, body and weight to master Parkour “bunny hops” he practiced over furniture.

Coresearchers often demonstrated high levels of resilience in pursuing structured sport and mastery. Four coresearchers sustained injuries sufficient to interrupt activity during the study. Georgia and Vixen Swift fell from horses, Reilly suffered an ankle strain from cheerleading and Harry had a leg injury from footballing shortly before the study started. Notwithstanding, Reilly remained confident and reported being lifted and thrown as the team’s flyer as easy. Whilst Georgia lost her nerve to continue horse riding lessons, she demonstrated resilience in other ways, pushing herself to brave cold water and inclement weather to join in family water sports and a personal challenge to learn to surfboard. Vixen Swift was nervous returning to her horse riding class but shared that this was the fourth fall she had experienced and philosophically repeated a horse riding mantra that it took nine falls to learn to ride well. These examples of resilience were a reminder of even greater hardships young dancers endured identifying as ballet dancers on their journey to becoming ballerinas (Pickard and Bailey, 2009; Bailey and Pickard, 2010). For Georgia, Reilly, Danny and Harry their hard work and commitment in pursuit activities was also linked to their self-identity and pursuit of achievement.

Vixen Swift confessed to having to overcome a loss of confidence from being shouted at by her instructor. She felt her instructor thought she was not listening to instructions, when actually she was struggling because her horse was being stubborn. Negative behaviours of coaches also directly impacted Danny and Gareth’s experience of academy football. Each of them experienced stark contrasts in their academy coaching environment by comparison with their community football teams, where coaching was nurturing and designed for enjoyment as well as team performance. None of the coresearchers selected

to play for higher level academy sides were willing to give up playing for their community football teams. Both Danny and Gareth soon gave up their academy places to concentrate upon their community football teams, primarily citing that the sessions were not fun or enjoyable. Coresearchers' experiences of coaching and instruction environments reflected existing research which highlighted the positive (Butt *et al.*, 2011; Kubayi, Toriola and Monyeki, 2013) and negative (Kuen, 2011; Gao, Podlog and Huang, 2013) impact that this can have on children's participation in physical activities.

Coresearchers had reasonable expectations that their mastery activities, whilst demanding hard work and commitment, were times that should be enjoyable and provide them with a sense of achievement supporting the principles of the DMSP model for encouraging sport participation widely cited in the literature review (Côté, Baker and Abernethy, 2007; Côté, Lidor and Hackfort, 2009). Injury and fear of injury impacted coresearchers differently, some accepting this element of participation as part of mastering skills/participation in the activity. Jay's experiences of school PE, however, led him to believe football was a physically uncomfortable experience, rugby games a way of getting hurt and both activities to be avoided.

Fun and enjoyment from mastery of activities

Enjoyment from mastery of skills and activities was frequently cited as a motivator for participation in PE and sport research (Mandigo and Holt, 2002; Kimiecik, 2005) and experiences of negative coaching environments as a barrier to participation (Strean, 2009). Coresearchers supported these findings across a wide range of activities. Georgia talked of the satisfaction of conquering skills; Harry of the fun of learning difficult skills; Danny of playing good football; Vixen Swift and Georgia; and Danny of giving good drama/cheerleading/Bhangra performances.

Coresearchers associated fun and enjoyment with competing well, but not directly with winning. Coresearchers were often unaware of game scores whether they won or lost. Danny and Georgia spoke specifically about not identifying with the disappointment of

fellow team members in losing. Instead they comforted team-mates and focused on positive achievements within their games. Coresearchers reported working as a team, working hard for the team, and being generous sharing play with team-mates, as important to their enjoyment; crystallised in Danny's community football team's exhortation to play 'good football'.

Fun and enjoyment were experienced at a personal level. Satisfaction was found in being recognised by others as skilled enough to be selected for a team. Georgia, Reilly and Vixen Swift commented upon raised affective states from the physical and emotional sensation of performing well and an embodied sense of achievement, which Georgia described in her heading 'Getting it'. These experiences appeared to be connected with findings of studies that reporting children liking the feeling of being active and even challenged (Coulter and Woods, 2011; Wellard, 2012).

Coresearchers also reported an embodied sense of enjoyment from mastery of personal challenges, such as learning Parkour flips and conquering novel activities, such as canoeing/body surfing/Ringing, which involved engagement with the natural environment. Humour and excitement accompanied much of the practice, in which failure was as entertaining and as much fun as achievement. Fun and enjoyment appeared to emanate from embodied and novel movement sensations, reflected in research examining embodied sporting experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Wellard, 2012).

Enjoyment was also associated with aesthetic experiences of movement and creativity in devising and mastering movement experiences reminiscent of studies of dance experiences (Bond and Stinson, 2000). For instance, positive aesthetic experiences emanated from successful drama, Bhangra or cheerleading performances, whilst Jay enjoyed emulating Parkour jumping from 'roof to roof' across beach boulders. Periods of flow state enjoyment from mastering moves (Bond and Stinson, 2007) and joyful raised affective states (Nielsen and Rowe, 2012) were visible.

Enjoyment was an important part of coresearchers' conceptualisation of activities. It was a necessary ingredient in supporting the hard work and resilience coresearchers invested in

sustained participation. Enjoyment came from a sense of achievement and positive embodied movement sensations from the mastery of skills of participation and performance in structured activities and movement challenges. This connected with challenge-skill state enjoyment situated at the start of the continuum of Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) flow states of enjoyment (Wright, Sadlo and Stew, 2007).

Identity and mastery of activity

Structured team sports and group activities provided a social context in which coresearchers expressed and developed their identity. Coresearchers committed to their activities, their team and coaches, but also demonstrated aspirations to be part of a broader association with participating in the sport/activity. This led to a quick assimilation of team/group behaviours, values and cultural norms of an activity.

Harry aspired to participate in academy level football. He quickly assimilated the disciplined and focused behaviours expected of him in academy sessions, such as running to and from water breaks and lining up in a particular way to attend to the coaches. Taking delivery of his new football academy kit was hugely exciting to him and embodied the fulfilment of his aspiration to be identified with academy level football performance. Harry also, however, valued playing with his community football team as did Danny and Gareth. Each of the coresearchers identified with their long term team-mates and the endeavour to perform well as that team. For Danny in particular, this meant hardly ever winning over several seasons even though his own skills were of a high standard.

Georgia created rallying mantra and celebratory signals for her netball team tournament, exercising her creativity and leadership and helping to bond the team socially. Like Reilly, Georgia also championed female sport as something to be taken seriously, with her male peers. She saw herself as only moderately competitive, except in response to boys at school who ridiculed girls' netball, when she initiated a successful netball challenge against them. Reilly chose to participate in a range of school sport teams and considered

herself as “athletic” and as a “sporty” female. She not only instigated arguments against the conceptualisation of team sports as a male domain, but also initially rejected the idea of joining Cheerleading Club because the (gendered) artistic presentation of the sport made it appear “too girly”. As soon as she realised how skilled the sport was, she was pleased to join her two older sisters in the club and enthusiastically embraced the difficulties of the sport and physical challenges of being lifted and thrown as her team’s flyer.

Danny’s football and Bhangra dance experiences strongly reflected the Sikh cultural values of the instructor in the emphasis that was placed on participating with positive values. Performing well in Bhangra was about working hard for the group, concentrating and giving all to the performance at the same time as having fun together. Playing good football was similarly about playing with integrity; not celebrating success ostentatiously; respecting the opposition and being respectful in a competitive environment; all of which was achieved by playing with a smile and with enjoyment. Danny took these values to participation in all his sports. He frequently highlighted and debated the behaviours of other teams he found wanting and frustrating with his football coach Father. Much of the literature focuses upon cultural and ethnic differences as a barrier to participation (e.g. Benn, Dagkas and Jawad, 2011; Thorjussen and Sisjord, 2018). Danny’s experiences of physical activity were enhanced by his family Sikh cultural heritage and community.

Mastery of activity experienced through structured sport and physical activity demonstrated the high value coresearchers placed upon collaborative participation and team performance. Coresearchers all valued endeavour, hard work and participating with positive personal values associated with mastery of activity above winning. These features of coresearchers’ experiences supported findings in the literature that children not only found opportunities for socialising in sport but gained psychological support from friends and coaches and a positive coaching environment (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007b). Reilly and Georgia championed positive female identity in sport and in doing so appeared untypical of research findings that girls tended to find less enjoyment in competition,

physicality and effort of participation in sports (Butt *et al.*, 2011). Harry, Danny and Gareth navigated the complexity of managing their aspirations to identify with higher level football whilst playing football in a positive environment which gave them enjoyment and continued to allow them to support their team-mates in their longstanding community team sides.

Overview of physical activity as mastery of activity

Mastery of activity was primarily identified in coresearchers' data associated with participation in structured physical activity, comprising competitive team sports or performance activities. Coresearchers' experiences widely supported existing studies which investigated children's motivations and barriers associated with participation in structured sport and physical activity, particularly studies underpinned by Self Determination Theories of participation. For instance, participation in PESS viewed through the lens of the Sport Education Model (Sidentop, 2002) or Teaching Games for Understanding (Stolz and Pill, 2014); investigation of participation in structured community sport using the Development Model of Sport Participation (Côté, Lidor and Hackfort, 2009). Coresearchers expected mastery activities to demand hard work and commitment, but also expected activities to provide them with a sense of achievement and enjoyment by way of reward. Injury and fear of injury impacted coresearchers differently, some perceived injury to be an acceptable ingredient of mastery activities whilst others a reason to avoid such activity just as reflected in Shorman's (1999) study of children's PE experiences.. A sense of achievement and enjoyment came from social and emotional feedback, from the experience of playing for and as a team, appreciating each team member's contribution. Endeavour, hard work and participating with positive personal values associated with mastery of activity was valued above winning (Wessinger, 1994). Coresearchers' experiences also demonstrated the complexity of fluid intertwining of sources of fun which impact children's motivations and experiences of structured physical activity (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007b; Wellard, 2012).

Not all coresearchers sought to participate in structured team sports, but still experienced physical activity as mastery of activity through individual skills and creative movement challenges. The self-determined characteristic of these personal challenges connects them to active play. However, movement challenges were also characterised by the motivation coresearchers brought to the activity to conquer a new skill, their commitment to practice and a sense of achievement and enjoyment on succeeding. Enjoyment also came from positive embodied performances and movement sensations as a result of mastering participation. Coresearchers' experiences from self-imposed movement challenges appear to build on both embodied experiences of free active play seen in the conceptualisation of physical activity as active play (Section 6.3) and research focused upon embodied experiences of different flow states (Romero and Calvillo-Gómez, 2014). Furthermore this finding supports the call in the literature for making a case to broaden the potential for children to experience bodily pleasure from physical activity (Whitehead, 1990; Wellard, 2012).

6.4.1 Being outdoors

Few coresearchers highlighted the outdoors in their data and none referred to the outdoors in their key headings to describe what was important in their data. Only Georgia referred directly to the outdoors as part of what she liked about her chosen physical activity; the peacefulness of being in the countryside horse riding and as an element of the fun of learning to paddle board. However, the outdoors was a fruitful context for active play and mastery activities reflecting Veitch's (2007) study identifying challenge and competition as a key source of enjoyment for outdoor active play.

Countryside walks, parks, playgrounds and beaches all featured in coresearchers' data, providing informal activity space for running around, cycling and scootering, sometimes accompanied by family dogs who provided a focus for active play also identified by Veitch et.al (2007) as sources of fun and enjoyment in outdoor spaces. Beach holidays and outings provided opportunities for clambering around rocks, building sandcastles and skimming stones on the shoreline.

Being outdoors was frequently associated with holidays and outings which provided space and time for novel active play which provided time and opportunities for family bonding (Pomfret and Varley, 2019). Day to day outdoor walks, cycle rides and outings were generally initiated by Mothers. Two Mothers whose coresearchers had only modest garden space for activity, referred specifically to getting coresearchers out of the house regularly during school holidays and weekends. Outdoor playgrounds were a significant part of Jay's and Beach Girl's data describing their chosen pursuits, Danny provided data showing himself playing with visiting cousins on an outdoor park gym, and Reilly practiced cycling and scootering around her local park whilst the family dog was exercised.

Coresearchers often appeared unexcited about family walks; for instance, Vixen Swift referred to walks sometimes being boring. However, coresearchers' own data demonstrated coresearchers being imaginative and using the opportunities the outdoor setting provided to create interest and have fun in active play. For instance, Vixen Swift ran ahead to climb and hide in a tree from her family and Danny provided photographs of impromptu attempts to swing across a small stream on a rope both creating challenges for themselves within the natural environment (Flett *et al.*, 2010). Meanwhile Jay brought imaginative computer gaming scenarios to family walks which became adventures engaging his family. Engaging parents in day-to-day outdoor activities provided time for family bonding in the same way as holidays and coresearchers demonstrated their delight in engaging with parents.

Coresearchers also chose outdoor pursuits, as holiday programmes for treats and as part of holidays. Xtreme Camp and Forest school provided coresearchers with opportunities for self-directed novel, adventurous, creative and fun active play. It was an environment in which to roam safely and play games of stealth and a place to learn how to construct assault courses and shelters. With the exception of team games played outdoors, IA was the only coresearcher to choose outdoor sports to master. She attended a holiday golf programme, which she did not select to include in her story of her chosen pursuits but did

include photographs and videos of Ringoing and water skiing. Sharing this interest with her Mother provided an opportunity for bonding and spending time together and the company of young adult coaches provided socialising opportunities which she enjoyed greatly.

In holiday time with family, coresearchers showed themselves trying to master a range of new water sports and playing informal games of water polo in holiday pools. Danny highlighted the impact of family holidays which provided family time together to try out new activities which they wouldn't normally do. Although holidays in warm climates abroad encouraged such activity, coresearchers' photographs depicted the majority of outdoor pursuits in quite poor UK weather conditions. No coresearcher referred to the cold or bad weather as a barrier to enjoyment.

In summary being outdoors with family provided time and space for active play and opportunities for trying novel activities. Coresearchers often focused upon being on holiday or on family outings, rather than their outdoor activity itself foregrounding the importance of bonding with family. Trying new activities became synonymous with family holidays/outings when parents were ready and able to play; no longer distracted by work, but ready to relax and have fun perhaps giving support to existing research findings that family time and play has been relegated to the edges of day to day family life (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018). Outdoor activities provided activities which parents and coresearchers could join in together. Coresearchers demonstrated their imagination and creativity in manipulating their outdoor environments and the simplest of activities to create fun and enjoyment. The outdoor environment provided opportunities to build, climb and explore; the space for expansive movement which was not available to them in their immediate home environment. Coresearchers' experiences supported the review of existing studies which found nature-based outdoor physical activity to be linked with increased physical activity (Clements, 2004; Sanders, Feng, Paul P. Fahey, *et al.*, 2015) and experiences of well-being (Liu *et al.*, 2015). In turn this provided further opportunities

to broaden embodied conceptualisations of physical activity by connecting with nature (Flett *et al.*, 2010).

6.4.2 Embodied movement experiences

Jay's abandoned run and belly dive into an autumn leaf pile whilst on an outdoor walk epitomised embodied coresearchers' conceptualisation of being physically active and was highly representative of Wellard's (2015) description of completely absorbed and highly exuberant embodied movement which was accessible to children and not just the prerogative of elite athletes. The action was spontaneous, imbued with imagination, physicality and enjoyment of connecting with his Mother and sister by performing to amuse. Embodied experiences as found were rarely explicitly verbalised often simply referring to an experience as "fun" (Shorman, 1999; Bond and Stinson, 2007; Wellard, 2015). However, the layered, aesthetic, social and emotional conceptualisation of experiences were evident in coresearchers' data captured visually, acted out and expressed in the intonation, laughter and creativity of expression.

First identified in the holiday play scheme pilot study (Plowright, 2015), embodied experiences described physical activities which were experienced through a range of senses, socially, emotionally, cognitively and aesthetically. Embodied experiences were associated with imagination, creativity, fun and enjoyment and resulted in heightened pleasure, for instance in the fun of playing out adventure games on the bouncy castle. The second pilot study revealed excited positive affective state play in elaborate creative chase and capture activities which brought computer games and popular children's culture to life. Notably children achieved this in the relatively restricted context, time and space of school playtimes.

In this study therefore embodied experiences were identified in coresearchers' descriptions and demonstration of physical activity in:

- The application of imagination in creative active play, which resulted in individual creative movements often accompanied by humour and silliness, performing and connecting with family or special friends
- Engagement in creative movement challenges often facilitated by the space of being outdoors including tree climbing and fording streams; also linked to children's culture and media interests such as bottle flipping, Parkour or football tricks and the use of equipment in playgrounds or practicing garden trampoline moves
- In the intensity of immersion in mastery activities such as team sport practice or Bhangra or drama performance, requiring hard work, social and emotional commitment and concentration.

An embodied approach to describing coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity in their chosen pursuits provided a holistic view of coresearchers' lived experiences. Coresearchers socially constructed their perceptions and beliefs about physical activity, not only from their movement and bodily sensations, but simultaneously through the emotional, social and cognitive experiences that accompanied them. This conceptualisation of physical activity echoed Whitehead's (1990) exhortation for the teaching of PE that children need not only to acquire physical skills but also an aesthetic, kinaesthetic, social and emotional appreciation of motion. For this group of coresearchers, an embodied conceptualisation of their chosen physical activities appeared instinctive and contributed to their fun and enjoyment of their chosen activities. The focus in phenomenological studies of PE to teach physical literacy (Whitehead, Durden-Myers and Pot, 2018) as embodied movement appears slightly at odds with this group of coresearchers' experiences of their free choice activities. Whilst perhaps only a nuanced difference a more accurate goal might be the nurturing of innate embodied understanding of physical activity to maximise children's awareness of physical literacy for life. This supports Connolly's (1995) emphasis upon listening to children's accounts of physical activity from which she concluded that children understood the embodied nature of their experiences. Similarly, Shorman (1999) concluded that young children of only 5-6 years

old did not separate their PE experiences into the physical aspect and other emotional, social and cognitive aspects. Further studies have consistently emphasised the complexity of layered responses to PE making up an embodied experience e.g. (Knowles, 2009; Lauruschkus, Nordmark and Hallström, 2015; Coulter *et al.*, 2020).

Challenge and mastery activities were closely related but resulted in different manifestations of embodied experiences. Challenge activities were often created by coresearchers in a social environment with the addition of an audience, generally close family. For instance Jay's leaping from rock to rock on the beach and love of manoeuvring through outdoor play equipment in non-convention ways are reminiscent of Flett's (2010) reflection that children enjoyed the outdoors by setting themselves physical challenges.

The potential jeopardy of the moves, focused attention on manipulating the body to achieve the desired outcome, shared and encouraged on by an audience and the elation of succeeding and practicing until succeeding, contributed to an enhanced affective state.

The uncertainty of outcome linked to mastery through performance and/or competition led to a heightening of awareness of the body participating in an activity. Embodied experiences came from hard work, often a tiring body, contributing to good performance, especially winning, which brought socially and emotionally enhanced affective states identified by Standal and Moe (2011). Periods of intense focus and concentration, immersion in activities accessed periods of flow states participation in activities identified as sources of fun and enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Romero and Calvillo-Gámez, 2014; Biddle, Nanette and Gorely, 2015).

6.4.3 Coresearchers' conceptualisation of their chosen pursuits?

Coresearchers conceptualised physical activity in their chosen pursuits as both active play and as opportunities to practice and master the skills to perform and to participate in structured physical activities and sports (i.e. mastery of activities). These two conceptualisations are shown at either end of a continuum of characteristics apparent in coresearchers' data describing their activities. Active play was characterised by agentic,

unstructured or fluidly structured, creative activity driven by imagination and humour. Fun and enjoyment were evidenced in the way coresearchers:

- Connected socially and emotionally with immediate family and special friends through teasing and shared humour; this extended to connecting with the family's culture of physical activity, in turn influenced by the family's socio-cultural roots
- Experienced embodied positive affective states from imaginative, creative and novel movement sensations.

Active play was an opportunity to behave in ways that were free of the discipline and physical constraints of coresearchers' structured lives in school. Data within the themes 'Chilling, Play and Fun' linked with 'Time with Family' and 'Creativity' as shown in Figure 18 described data associated with this conceptualisation of physical activity.

At the other end of the continuum, physical activity as mastering activity was characteristically associated with a specific sport or activity regulated by rules of engagement and a specific culture of behaviour. Activities generally involved coaching and instruction in recognised skills and competencies of the sport/activity. Enjoyment emanated from a sense of achievement; personal development and growth; fulfilment of personal aspirations to perform and to be associated with higher level performance.

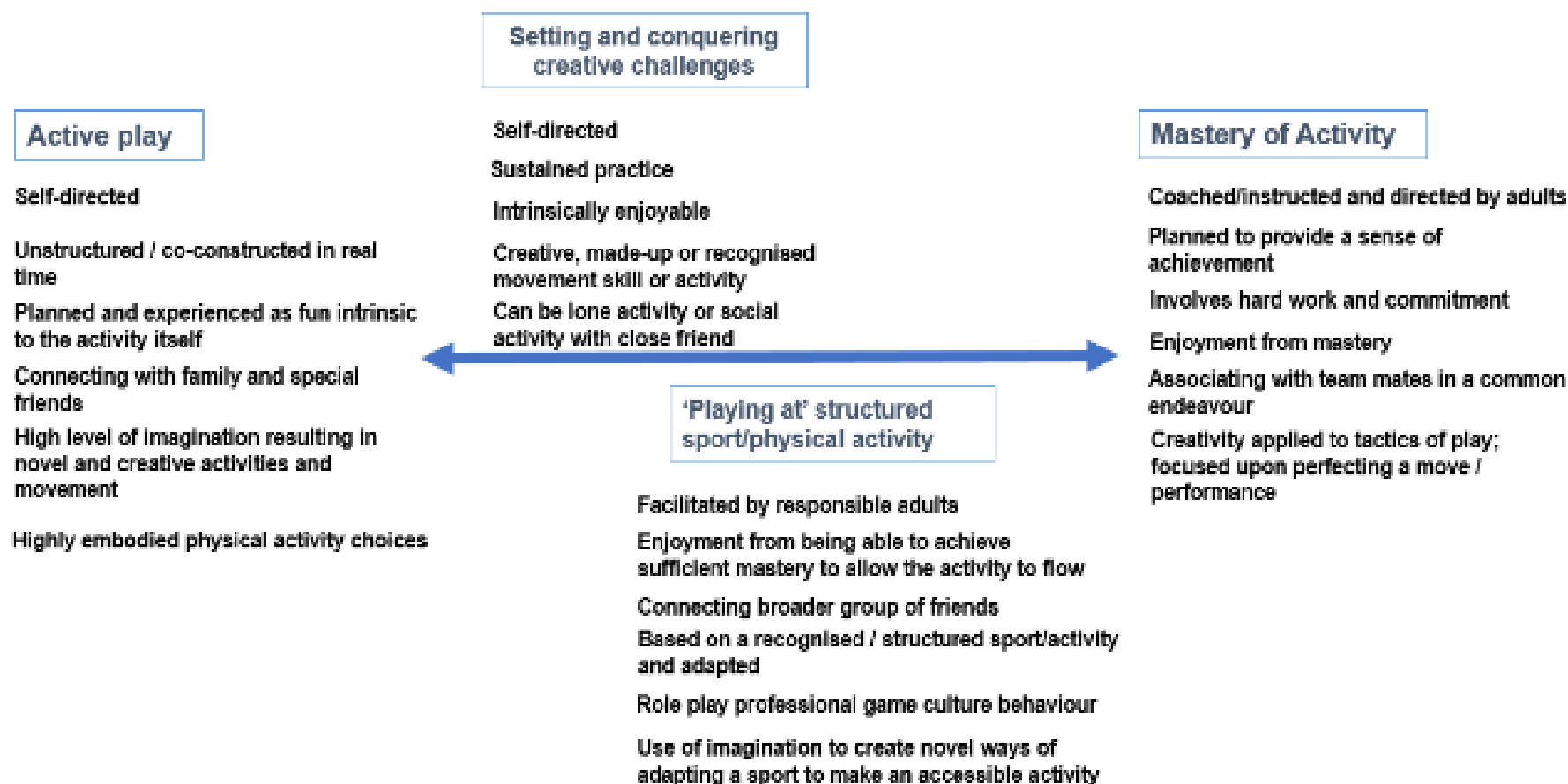


Figure 20 The continuum of characteristics of coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity

The 'Mastery of activities' linked with 'Identity' and 'Creativity' described coresearchers' data associated with this conceptualisation of physical activity (see Figure 19).

Between these two extremes coresearchers also conceptualised physical activity 'playing at sports' (see 6.3 'Features of Chilling, Play and Fun as active play') and physical activity as 'setting and conquering personal challenges' (see 6.4 'Fun and enjoyment from mastery of activities'). Male coresearchers informally "played at" football as well as participating in structured competitive football. Fun and humour were exhibited in popular cultural behaviours of the stylised celebrations and hand/body gestures. Coresearchers appeared to be role playing formal sport/activities and identifying with popular culture, adventure and high performance as part of their participation. Coresearchers also set themselves individual movement and skills challenges such as trampoline somersaults; manoeuvres through playground equipment; balance skills on paddle/body boards. Mastery of challenges was play-like with intrinsic enjoyment in the challenge itself as well as satisfaction from successful achievement, whilst also having the characteristic of requiring focused practice. Parkour moves provided such challenges, whilst also providing the opportunity to "play at" this new popular street sport.

Coresearchers' conceptualisations encompassed a full range of physical activities from active play to structured performance sport, outdoor and active creative pursuits. Focusing upon coresearchers' conceptualisation in the way they made and then lived out their chosen activities foregrounded the embodied, creative and imaginative nature of their physical activity. Physical activity choices were simultaneously social, emotional and aesthetic movement experiences engendering positive affective states. When those choices ceased to engender positive affective states, (e.g. when fear of injury or negative coaching environments impacted the experience) coresearchers often moved away from the activity.

These findings supported the growing bodies of literature proposing an embodied approach to understanding children's experiences of physical activity. For instance, the conceptualisation of PE as an embodied subject of study focused upon developing

children's physical literacy; and investigations of children's lived experiences of structured sport and dance performance.

What coresearchers' conceptualisations of their chosen physical activities do not foreground are the dominant policy discourses of children's physical activity in England as: a means to achieve increased levels of physical activity; better health and well-being; greater social awareness and connectedness; higher levels of resilience which can support academic endeavour and success (see Chapter 1 Introduction).

As would be reasonable to expect in a study of coresearchers' free-choice pursuits, coresearchers were focused upon having fun resulting in raised affective states. In each case this included physically active pursuits albeit varied across a wide spectrum of activities. Whilst a small sample from which it was not possible to draw generalisable findings, coresearchers' chosen experiences of physical activity spanned a reasonably broad range of pursuits within which there were recurring patterns.

Coresearchers' conceptualisations of their various activities were also supported by general studies of children's physical activity motivations as well as the growing body of phenomenological studies and studies of the lived experiences of physical activity. In addition, coresearchers exhibited a high level of creativity and imagination in their physical activity choices which was part of discussion of active play but less apparent in existing literature of physical activity more generally.

These findings support an approach to increasing children's physical activity engagement through a broader embodied conceptualisation of physical activity and physical activity pursuits. In policy terms this recommends a move away from dominant pathogenic discourses of physical activity focusing upon increased participation in PE, school and community sport for health and well-being to a focus upon developing a movement culture (Ward and Griggs, 2018). The concept of a movement culture arises from concerns that PE and PE teacher education has become shaped and bound by the 'ideologies of previous generations of physical educators, respectively the "education of the physical" and the "education *through* the physical" (Crum, 1993, p. 339). Crum (1993) by contrast

promoted the idea of teaching a movement culture which ‘refers to the way in which a social group deals with the issue of corporeality and embodiment and the need and desire for movement beyond labor or maintaining life’(Crum, 1993, p. 340). Movement culture refers to the values, beliefs, traditions etc. underpinning a broad definition of activity behaviours which is much wider than physical activity and sport. Such an initiative, would support further development of the broadening Government sport policy approaches to encourage physical activity as well as sport and participation in family-based activities (Sport England, 2016b) as well as individual activity.

The coresearchers’ conceptualisations of physical activity in their data revealed further themes and nuances in existing themes to describe coresearchers’ experiences of physical activity, which are developed in the next section in response to the second research question.

6.5 RQ2. How do coresearchers experience physical activity in their free-choice pursuits?

To answer this second question, I brought together coresearchers’ own headings to describe their data with inductively coded themes. I then used this modelling of each coresearchers’ data to structure vignettes revealing the essences of their lived experiences of chosen physical activity as far as possible in their own words.

Figure 21 updates the schematic representation of inductively coded themes in coresearchers’ data with their own thematically coded headings (see Figure 17 at close of Chapter 5) applying insights from discussion of how coresearchers conceptualised physical activity (RQ1). Positioning coresearchers’ headings within specific inductively coded themes became increasingly difficult as the complexity of experiences which related to multiple themes was revealed. I acknowledged that I used my own interpretation of coresearchers’ data to place headings although always referencing coresearchers’ data to support decisions. What remained most important was the potential insights into coresearchers’ physical activity experiences that the modelling could provide.

Fun and enjoyment were seen to underpin all aspects of coresearchers' free choice physical activity, with the exception of occasional experiences associated with mastery of activities, such as injury or fear of injury and discomfort often associated with outdoor environments. Fun and enjoyment were therefore shown underpinning all other experiences, rather than being associated specifically with "Chilling, Play and Fun".

Imagination and creativity were drawn out of coresearcher's themes of 'Creativity' and positioned centrally to demonstrate its broader connection across coresearchers' pursuits. This was supported by the coresearchers' widespread use of imagination to drive and shape physical activity which provided many creative activity outcomes in coresearchers' data. The theme was then positioned centrally intersecting all other themes.

171102 MEM ANA Challenge of gaining insight into children's lived experience of PA

The challenge of exploring the lived experiences of physical activity with 7-11 year old coresearchers is that children express themselves in ways that adults have grown beyond understanding. They express themselves bodily, creatively, through engagement in fantasy and in humour. Children often express their experience of physical activity as they experience it. Their expression of it is an integral part of the physical activity itself. It is in summary an act of play where play is defined by being fun and purposeless or engaged in for its own sake. Adults generally forget how to play and what play is.

Reflexive thinking 23: Challenge of gaining insight into children's lived experiences of PA

Coresearchers' data included many expressions of the social, emotional and aesthetic aspects of their experiences of physical activity even though this did not result in a specific heading chosen by any coresearcher. I reflected upon the challenge of exploring children's lived experiences of physical activity (Reflexive thinking 23). I was reminded of Shorman's (1999) finding in her study of children's PE that embodied experiences she observed in children's participation in PE were passed by silently and also Bond and Stinson's (2000) reflection that young dancers tended not to articulate their embodied experiences in any detail reverting more often to describing activities as simply 'fun'. "Embodied movement sensations" was added as a theme supported by coresearchers' direct references, for instance to physical effects of working hard at an activity and/or observed enjoyment of novel and silly movement sensations; the social and bonding experiences of being active with close family.

The theme 'Identity' described data in which coresearchers expressed their personal and social values in the way they structured and experienced physical activity. 'Expressing self' more accurately described this data.

Finally, whilst no coresearcher specifically referenced the outdoors as the focus for their chosen pursuits, the outdoors provided an environment for many activities. I added the theme 'Experiencing the outdoors' to foreground coresearchers' references to the impact of the natural environment on their sensations of being outdoors; and activity which included such experiences as a sense of peacefulness, challenges and opportunities to exploit the natural environment.

These developing themes were used to prepare and locate the essence of individual coresearchers' experiences of physical activity in their free choice pursuits as they themselves expressed them. As far as possible the vignettes which follow use coresearchers' own accounts of their physical activity experiences to illustrate the complexity and layering of experiences which resulted in the distinctive nature of each coresearcher's experiences. Narratives were prepared collaboratively from discussions of their stories and supporting data. Harry opted to complete his research work after compiling his collage mind map of data and did not go on to distil his data in the form of a summary story. Adopting Connolly's approach, coresearchers' stories of their experiences of physical activity 'offers us a means to discover the dance and poetry in every body; phenomenology offers us a means of disclosing them' (1995, p. 39).

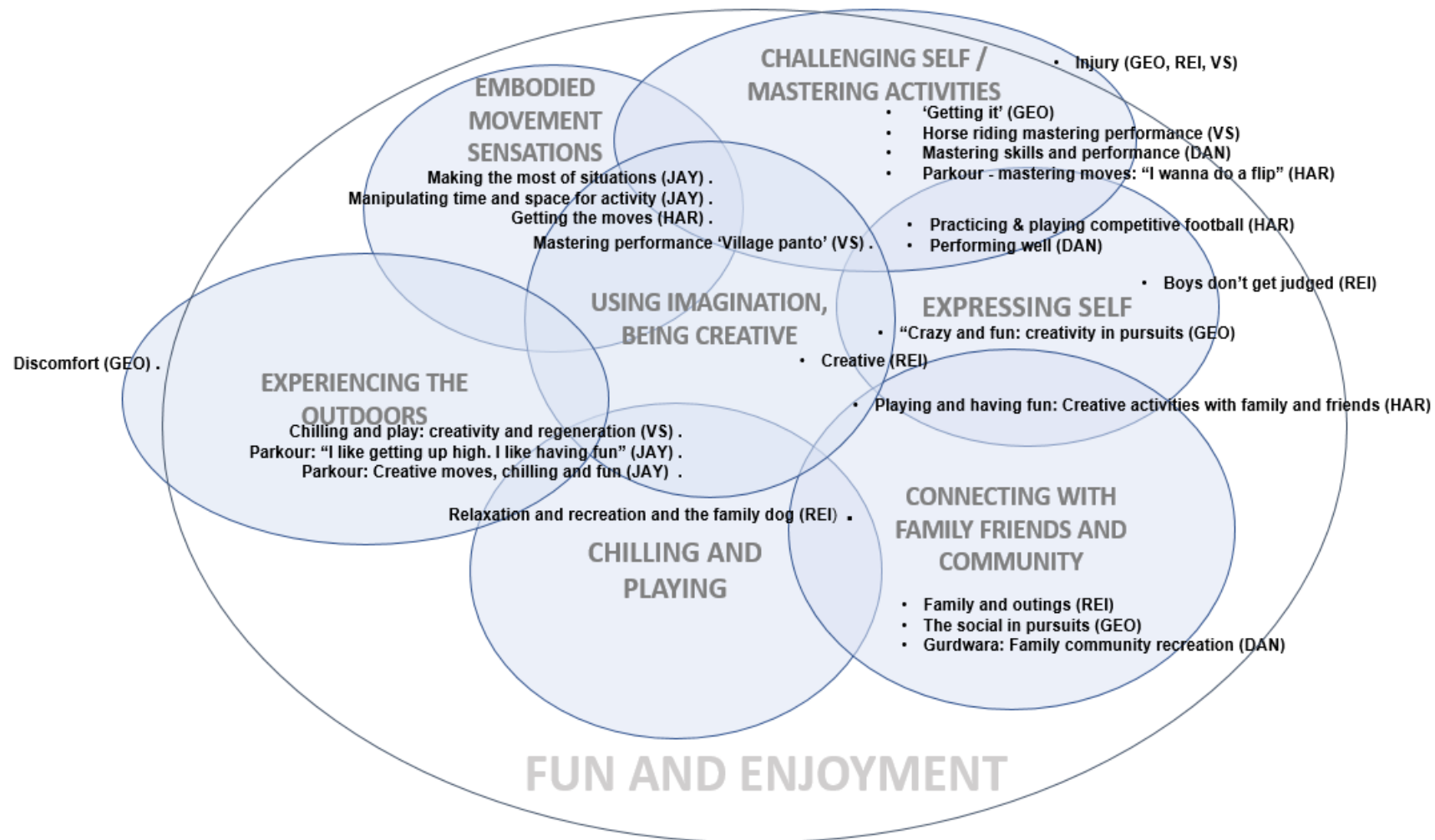


Figure 21 Schematic diagram to show updated themes to describe coresearchers' experiences of physical activity in their free choice

6.6 Overview of coresearchers' experiences of physical activity

The coresearchers' own descriptions, together with inductively analysed themes in their data, combined to reveal a number of recurring features about coresearchers' experiences. Coresearchers experienced physical activity in their free choice pursuits as:

- Fun and enjoyable activity they could shape for themselves in response to a fluid and layered complexity of influences in their immediate environment (space/time and resources available to them) building on previous positive experiences
- Enjoyable time to connect and deepen bonds with close family, particularly parents and special friends; characterised by shared humour and teasing, built within the intimacy of the family or special friendship
- A time to use their imagination, to construct free flowing novel activities/movements, free of restrictions or the regulation they experienced in their institutionalised lives; a time when they could manipulate time/space and non-traditional situations for physical activity
- A time to challenge themselves, to try to master new activities and movement sensations
- A sense of achievement and embodied responses to mastering movement/ activity challenges as a reward for hard work, physical/emotional and mental immersion in an activity
- An opportunity to express themselves and their aspirations as a developing embodied person; socially, emotionally and aesthetically
- An opportunity to explore the novelty and challenges of outdoor spaces and interaction with the natural environment.

281117 MEM FIND Impact of interaction with family on experience of PA - extract

The importance of parents in the development of child's own physical being is not just about having active role models; parents having time to help select, transport to and from and support children's choices of PA but also about providing at least in part the social bond within the PA.

Evidenced by some children refusing to take part in something recommended by parents because it took away their only family day and family things they did (out for a meal and a walk in the park – GEO & GAR)

Reflexive thinking 24: Impact of family interaction on experience of PA

I have included examples of these features on the final schematic representation of themes underpinning coresearchers' experiences in their data in Figure 22. These illustrate and illuminate the coresearchers' lived experiences.

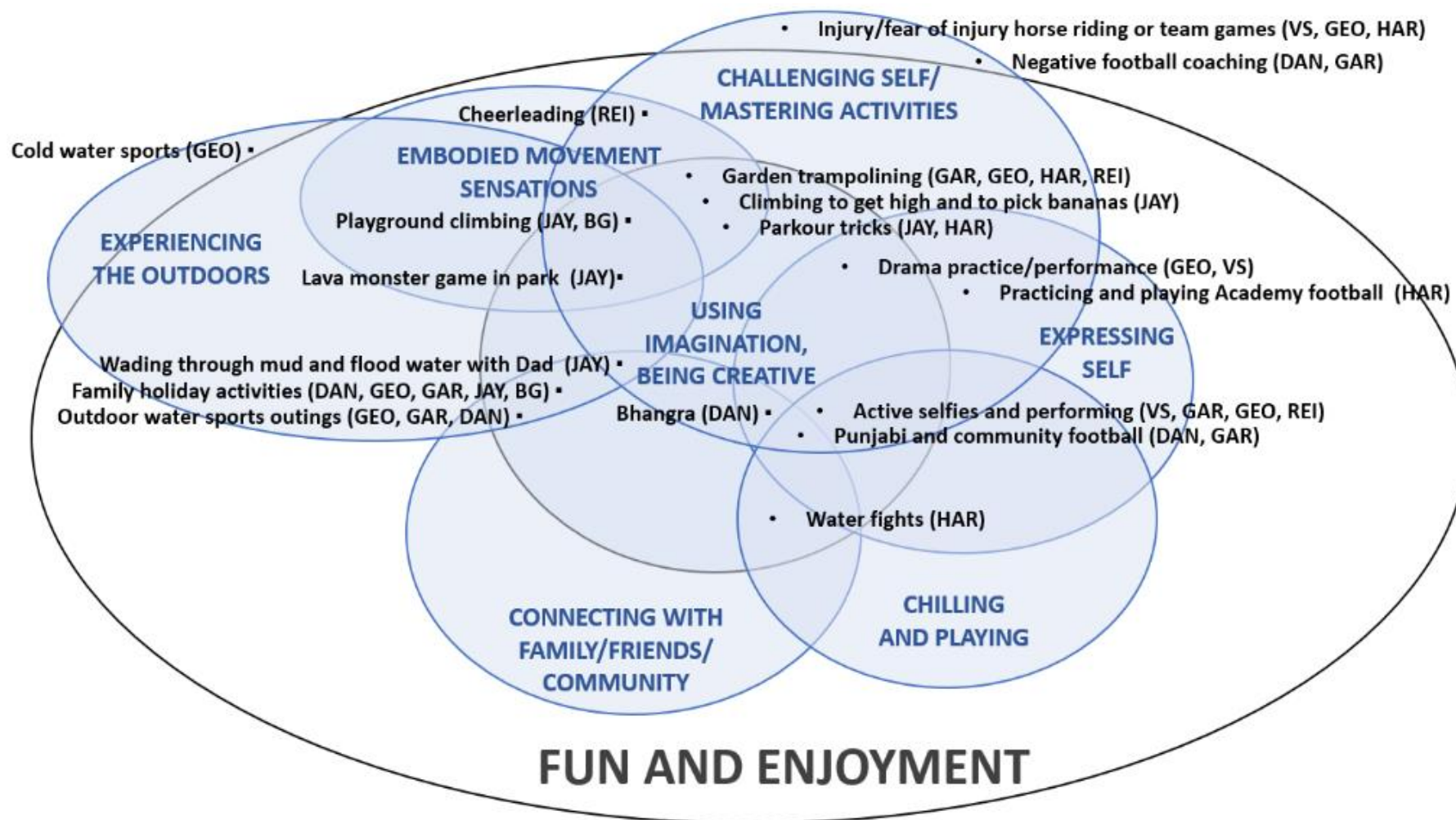


Figure 22 Schematic diagram to show the development of coresearchers themes describing their chosen physical activity

6.6.1 Vixen Swift

Vixen Swift juxtapositioned her experiences of physical activity with her demanding school routine from which she needed time to recover and re-energise. She chose activities she didn't pursue in school or as school clubs, differentiating and providing novelty in her free-choice activities. She undertook those activities either alone, with her parents and Sister or a close friend, in stark contrast to the excitable body of children by whom she was surrounded in school.

With the exception of horse riding and drama, her physical activity was characterised by active play. Her interest in drama dominated her free-choice pursuits and was physically active. She derived great enjoyment from belonging to her village panto group and her holiday drama camp. The creepy topic of Halloween appealed to her imagination. She enjoyed working collaboratively with her group to co-create highly imaginative scenes, deriving pride and satisfaction from a polished performance at the end of the week. The activity was highly self-directed, with the support of a drama leader who took a collaborative, facilitating role.

Active play at home was also highly performance-based engaging her parents, Sister and/or her best friend. Physical activity was a vehicle for connecting with her family in activities characterised by humorous, imaginative role play, enacting selfies and diva dancing. Whilst her focus was upon dramatic impact and entertaining family members, Vixen Swift was highly physically active. Dramatic play also appeared to provide her with time for silliness as a respite from the rigours of a disciplined school routine.

In stark contrast, Vixen Swift's experience of horse riding was highly structured, instructor-directed and focused upon mastering the skills of riding. Her demeanour under instruction was serious, focused and determined. She experienced frustration from not being able to control her pony as she wanted and being shouted at by her instructor. This, together with her history of falls, revealed high levels of resilience that she brought to the activity; an activity she pursued in cold and uninviting weathers. Her love of the horses themselves as

an extension of the love of her pets, and a determination to master the skills of riding, appeared to drive her continued pursuit of the activity.

Vixen Swift enjoyed being outdoors and chose forest school as a holiday activity. Once again the activity was self-directed, facilitated not directed by forest leaders. Free to shape her own activity with her Sister and close friend, they created an imaginative shelter, which boasted the humorous addition of written estate agent details and an outside toilet roll delivery system. Vixen Swift stopped outdoor walks with her family becoming boring by manipulating her environment, for instance practicing her love of climbing.

Vixen Swift in her own words:

My school days are very long and because of that I actually don't have a lot of spare time, although I relax often and do quite lots of activities such as: horse riding, piano and singing. I really enjoy these! Horse riding can be a bit nerve racking because falling off hurts quite a lot! When I am left to my own devices I play with toys such as Playmobil or build a bears, I also join in with other activities like the village panto that I have been attending for the last two years; acting has become much easier for me! Climbing is another hobby up trees or up a cliff! Selfies. Wonderful selfies. I LOVE them so much! And I also enjoy playing with them often!!!! Often when I wake up, I will sit on the sofa and chill ☺!

6.6.2 Georgia

Georgia experienced physical activity both as active play and as mastery of activities across a variety of team and individual sports and activities. She chose physical activity for birthday and family treats as a core part of her free-choice pursuits. Physical activities were opportunities to represent and express herself as creative and fun and as a skilled performer/achiever.

Georgia enjoyed collaborative team-work and social aspects of organised sports and structured activities. She was confident, enthusiastic and often contributed creative ideas,

to build team spirit, creating team signals and celebrations. Georgia's focus was upon performing well rather than winning. She was prepared to practice and work hard at a sport to reap the rewards of a good performance. As a result, Georgia experienced much positive feedback from those with whom she performed and competed.

Georgia challenged herself physically to confront experiences out of her comfort zone, for instance to take part in family outdoor activities involving cold water, but nonetheless considered herself as less adventurous than her younger brother. Physical activity was a means of spending fun and enjoyable time with her immediate family, and the draw to engage with family members could help her overcome initial reticence, for instance to potentially get wet and cold in a new activity. However, the opportunity to spend time with her family was insufficient to encourage her to overcome the potential embarrassment of publicly displaying her lack of skills to join in a family cricket session. She enjoyed being selected for school sport teams because of the recognition from others that she was good enough to be selected. Simultaneously she did not appear to wish to expose her lack of skills. Within the confines of her family, best friends and home, however, Georgia was quick to engage in creative humorous active play, often with her younger Brother to engage in the fun and enjoyment of shared silliness.

In Georgia's own words:

I used to go to for swimming lessons and still go to Hayfield Vale to swim. I also used to go to horse riding lessons. It was hard work, but I found it quite fun and it helped to make my riding better. I had a fall and broke my arm, so I stopped horse riding lessons. Horse riding lessons can be a bit scary. I still like horses and, in the future, will probably just go for treks in the holidays. Drama took over my life completely. I go to drama club at school and in the village. I enjoy acting, being in the limelight, being able to play different characters. When you do a perfect scene or when you just go up and have fun ... it just makes you feel happy"

I go round friend's houses and I visit my grandma and grandad and see my little cousin Ricky. At home I like cooking and watching TV. I like to read because it gives me more vocabulary for when I write. I like to write. I trampoline and practice netball in the garden. Netball is really fun because you can run around and it's really energetic.

As a family we go to the rec' and play cricket and we have a run around when we go to Vale in Pensfield. We also go on a lot of holidays and outings like a water sports centre. It's really nice to be outside and when you're with your family it makes you happy and the activities I've never tried before quite fun.

6.6.3 Jay

Jay experienced physical activity as an embodied extension of his screen-based and YouTube viewing. His physical activity was characterised as high energy active play, which included mastery of movement challenges inspired by the adventures he re-enacted. Jay was adept at manipulating his environment, creating activity spaces/times and engaging available adults to facilitate his active play. For instance, park walks became the setting for lava monsters games with his [Father/Grandfather](#). He also maximised the potential for physical activity from modest home-based space and resources, for instance practicing climbing up stored fencing and perfecting football tricks in his small garden. Jay perceived structured football as physically uncomfortable and rugby as potentially harmful; his activities were individual and self-directed. He set himself creative movement challenges for instance in unexpected routes through climbing frames and the perfecting of Parkour climbs and tricks, which he analysed into minute movement details.

In Jay's own words:

I like to play my computer games when I get home from school. I just do it because I'm like bored and plus it's super fun. I like doing missions and helping people ... slide tackling them and rescuing them and stuff.

Climbing is my favourite. I like getting up high. I like having fun. It feels 'Gooood because I love climbing when I'm older I just wanna learn Parkour and go free running in town and do like just like jump over stuff, climb over stuff, do flips over stuff. To learn my Parkour: I'm just like climbing and like practicing jumping off stuff and climbing high places. I practice at home over the sofa and at my Sister's house on her sofa.

Parks and playgrounds are separate, because playgrounds are like concrete and (parks) like an open field. And parks have like obstacles and stuff. I don't like the playground much because it's really boring. In the open fields, yeah I love doing it (walking) then it makes me a challenge to get out and get my wellingtons on.

When we go on our scooters and like when I see big puddles, I go through them like wheeeeeeeee; put this leg up Wheeeeeee. When it's sunny and we go to Kirk Stanley and with Grandad, I could ask him if we could play lava monster, because it's like a game where you like so you can't touch the floor because it's all lava but the ... lava monster can come up on the stuff an' it doesn't leave lava laying around but if it touches you, you're a lava monster.

6.6.4 Reilly

Reilly's choice of pursuits in her free time were as creative as they were active. However, she had the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities which she took up with enthusiasm, encouraged by a sporty extended family. Physical activity for Reilly was an opportunity to express her identity as a sporty, active and able girl. She was frustrated by what she saw as a lack of opportunity for girls to participate in organised sports like football and was keen to prove herself capable of any activity. In her outdoor holiday

camps, she competed hard, particularly with the boys, and would instigate rough and tumble play to demonstrate her strength and skills. Being recognised by others as skilled in an activity pleased her. She was daring and brave in approaching new challenges and worked hard and earnestly to master activities.

In contrast, Reilly also experienced physical activity as relaxed family time. This was a time to connect particularly with her Mother and younger siblings. This time involved unstructured and free flowing outdoor activities, when they walked, cycled and explored parks and beaches. Opportunities for active play developed out of these times, often centred upon the creation of a game to entertain and exercise the family dog.

In Reilly's own words:

I am lucky because I get to try all sorts of activities which my Dad's company runs. My last birthday for instance I had a pool party with my friends. I enjoy time with my family at home, "chillin'" or being creative. I live on a busy main road, but my Mum gets us out every day of our holidays to the park or somewhere else. I like to ride my bike around. I walk Kevin (family dog) sometimes. In the summer we play a lot of football in the garden, because Dad's a football coach and he brings footballs and posts home and we play with Kevin.

I do loads of different sport and adventurous activities. I've been indoor body surfing. You start off body surfing and then you try to push yourself up, but it's really hard to stay there because all the water's pushing you. I went climbing with the Brownies on an indoor rock face last year. I had climbed before on my Dad's company climbing wall which has three faces. The three different faces are different levels of difficulty to climb and the walls moved in the wind making it even harder. I started Cheerleading last year. Cheerleading is a team activity and I am a flyer. Being lifted up is just basically like being thrown up in the air; some people are scared to do it but it's sort of easy for me. I'm quite competitive. I used to think that it was easy to do all the things (cheerleading moves) and I just didn't like the

fact that it was all girly, but it's not that girly, it's quite serious, you could get seriously hurt.

6.6.5 Danny

Danny participated in a wide variety of school sports and extra-curricular activities, which resulted in a busy school week. He experienced physical activity in his free choice pursuits in an almost entirely male environment as the eldest of three active brothers. Their focus outside school was upon male dominated activities of football and Bhangra dance. Data featuring his Mother was generally associated with extra-curricular educational activities, socialising and recreational pursuits.

Danny experienced physical activity primarily through the lens of mastering football, which he played or practiced at least four times a week for his school, community and Punjabi sides. He evaluated the benefit of participating in other sports and structured activities in relation to how it could improve his football skills and performance. However, in spite of his enthusiasm to improve his football skills and performance, he gave up his place on an Academy side because he found the coaching environment negative and unenjoyable. This highlighted the importance of the positive team values that Danny had learned from his Father as his football coach. He took those values to all his physical activities and worked as hard as possible to support team members to achieve good performances.

Connecting with his family and consequently, his wider Punjabi community, through his Punjabi league football team and Bhangra dance was an important motivation in Danny's physical activity. He and his Father and two younger brothers shared a passion for football. Danny was also keen to learn about his cultural heritage. Bhangra dance enabled Danny and his Brothers to connect with their Sikh community and contribute performances to family and community celebrations. Family holidays and outings featured novel activities and challenges often led by Danny's Father, featuring much teasing, friendly competitiveness, and rough and tumble. Active play was a way of relaxing and connecting with wider family members, characterised by creating games in the garden for

younger cousins. Danny was the eldest and naturally assumed the role of organiser and leader on these occasions, encouraging and supporting young cousins, creating a fun environment for them all.

In Danny's own words:

On Friday I do Tag Rugby after school. I have played for my school in a Tag Rugby tournament. On Saturday I've got football matches, league games or friendlies with Redfern Rangers. I have a daily plank. I was part of a local cricket club, but I don't do that anymore. I didn't prefer it over football. We're going to try to do some kick boxing; I like World Wrestling Entertainment videos and I used to do Taekwondo. I've done Bikeability as well. I liked Bikeability because you learn all the signs. Basically, the people take you out ... on the roads so you'll know what to do. Saturday it's good because after football we sit down and watch the football on TV. We don't have time in the week to play on iPads and things and so on Saturday and Sunday we (he and his two younger Brothers) get up, before our parents and it is just a bit relaxing because nobody's downstairs.

My Dad and I have our Sunday run – I've only got him out once. On some Sundays we go to our Gurdwara and contribute to the work there. We also do Bhangra dance on Sundays. Bhangra dance is both a sport and an art. It's good for sport because you're moving around a lot and ... then it is a performance arts thing too. It is nerve racking before you get up to perform, but once you started doing it, it's not. Also, when all the family finds out that you do Bhangra you have to do it at weddings and things.

6.6.6 Harry

Football was definitely a favourite activity. Harry liked Brazilian Soccer because he learned different skills and he found it really fun. However, he was willing to give up the weekly session when he earned an academy football club place. He reflected that

academy training was more important than “the tippy tappy stuff” that he learned in Brazilian Soccer but never used in matches. Harry was not, however, as willing to give up playing with his friends at his town football side and was relieved that timetabling of practices still allowed him to do so. Harry was keen to improve his skills and worked hard playing and practicing football at least four times a week. He was extremely focused when playing or practicing, deeply and seriously immersed in the activity. At home, however, Harry’s activity was characterised by laughter and playfulness. Harry bounced on his garden trampoline every day as soon as he finished school and when he was bored and wanted to do something outside. He wanted to get good at flicks on his garden trampoline to show his friends and enjoyed the sensation of practicing his moves, quick to dissolve into giggles when they didn’t work. Harry was inspired by YouTube coverage of people doing crazy flips. He created Parkour challenges for himself and was daring in his moves, such as jumping from the garden shed onto the trampoline. Harry was adventurous and brave in his movement challenges. His playful interest in Parkour developed into wanting to master moves which led him to join trampoline club, where his tricks became stylised and perfected. He quickly perfected his existing moves and mastered more complex ones, with the same concentration and sense of satisfaction in success as he experienced in practicing football. Harry’s active play was influenced by his YouTube viewing and computer gaming. He created imaginative free-flowing games, which provided a range of physical experiences such as water fights, Nerf attack games and pillow attacks. He drew his willing parents into his active play which **focused upon** fun and silliness. He enjoyed the company of his parents and close friend who were willing collaborators in his games and playful activities.

7 RQ3 What were the socioecological factors which impacted upon the structuring and experience of physical activity?

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I address the third study question by exploring socioecological factors revealed within coresearchers' data associated with their conceptualisations and experiences of their chosen physical activity (see Chapter 5: Findings, Section 5.8.3) to ascertain if and how these impacted the conceptualisations and experiences of their physical activity. This comprised physical activity choices mediated by 'the influence of family members, particularly parents and grandparents' and 'family circumstances'; the direct and indirect 'impact of school'. Then finally the 'opportunities for physical activity' which included availability of community and extra-curricular school provision of activities mediated by national policies of provision for children's physical activity (see Chapter 5: Section 5.8.3).

There were a number of reasons for investigating these factors using a socioecological framework for analysis. In Chapter 6 (section 6.1) I touched upon the question of coresearchers' agency which, at age 7-11 years old, existed within their lived experience of family and school life. Coresearchers' agency and choice of physical activity pursuits were framed by socioecological factors shaping their lives. As demonstrated in Chapter 2 Literature Review, historically, sociocognitive frameworks (such as the application of self-determination theory) and more recently humanistic approaches to explain physical activity behaviours (for instance using ethnographic studies) have dominated studies of children's physical activity. Rhodes et.al (2019) make a compelling case for dual process frameworks which combine these (and other) approaches with non-conscious and hedonic factors underlying physical activity behaviours, for instance the impact of fun and enjoyment. These sorts of studies remain understudied and have potential to broaden

understanding. Simultaneously the literature review revealed recent interest in the use of socioecological frameworks to study children's physical activity which focused beyond individual explanations of behaviours (see Chapter 2; 2.9). I was particularly drawn to O'Connor et. al.'s (2012) study which appeared to respond to the need some researchers had identified to move beyond public policy discourses framing children's physical activity (see Chapter 2: close of section 2.9). By applying intra-personal, inter-personal and environmental lenses to 'extend the gaze beyond activity-driven practice and 'downstream' exercise for health'(O'Connor, Alfrey and Payne, 2012, p. 365). Combining a participatory phenomenological approach with the application of a socioecological framework had potential for broadening understanding of factors in coresearchers' data which impacted their PA conceptualisations and experiences.

A socioecological approach to investigating this final question was also highly compatible with the overall social constructivist framing of the study (Chapter 3). Constructions of phenomena take place within socioecological environments and are impacted by social and cultural influences operating in those environments, at immediate and at societal levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2006; Spence and Lee, 2003). For instance, the value society places upon physical activity will impact parent, family and peer group attitudes and beliefs about physical activity. The value parents place upon academic studies, rather than participation in sport, will impact children's opportunities to take part in what programmes are offered.

Socioecological models of behaviour have been used to try to better understand children's health and physical activity behaviours (Spence and Lee, 2003; Sallis et al., 2006; Richard, Gauvin and Raine, 2011; Zhang et al., 2011), and to develop models which might encourage sustained participation in sport and physical activity (Welk, 1999; Côté and Vierimaa, 2014). Ecological models investigate the impact on behaviour of sociocultural factors, such as the impact of different social groups (e.g. family, school classmates and/or belief systems, customs/practices), together with ecological factors, which refer to

specific space, equipment and time factors (e.g. home or sports club, holiday, weekend or school time).

Inductive analysis of coresearchers' data generated two themes describing ecological factors impacting their chosen physical activity, comprising:

- Influence of family members – comprising family, particularly parental attitudes and enthusiasms towards physical activity; close family role-models; family rules and responsibilities; and coresearchers' levels of agency
- Resources to support coresearchers to participate in their chosen physical activity particularly described as:
 - Demands on time and energy – comprising both coresearchers' time free from school and other obligations in combination with parents' freedom from work and their obligations to support their children to access chosen activities
 - Accessibility of other resources to support activity – comprising space, facilities, equipment and financial resources to facilitate coresearchers' choices.

These themes resonated with features of social settings which make up the inner-most social system of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development. Each social setting comprises a specific place and physical features, time, activity, participant, and role of the person in the social engagement (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). The theoretical underpinning of Bronfenbrenner's model lent itself to investigation of factors impacting coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity. For instance, use of the model positions physical activity as an integral part of human development, as a:

'progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life span, between a growing human organism and the changing immediate environments in which it lives' (Bronfenbrenner, 2006, p. 514).

The model can be used to recognise each coresearcher's position at the centre of multiple layers of social interactions, through which coresearchers developed their physically active being. The model also recognised coresearchers' agency in shaping their physical activity behaviours. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's model is discussed and applied in the following section.

7.2 Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development

In applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development to the study (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), I positioned coresearchers in the centre of four concentric circles of interacting social systems, (microsystems; mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems).

Each coresearcher was in direct contact with a number of different social settings (microsystems). These shaped their experiences of their chosen physical activities comprising immediate and also extended day-to-day family interactions; family holidays and outings; home-based active play; community sport / activity clubs and programmes; after school care clubs and extra-curricular school sports/activity clubs and teams.

These social settings interacted with one another (creating mesosystems) and gave rise to further different social interactions. For instance, the impact of holidays and outings upon the behaviours and activities shared with immediate family members; the activities selected and how they were experienced when extended family members visited coresearchers at home; the attitudes of family members upon structured community sport activities.

Moving beyond immediate social settings with which coresearchers were in direct contact, further social settings (exosystems) shaped coresearcher's activities and experiences. These were characterised by institutionalised structures and systems, policy and practices comprising:

- Government and school policies governing the importance placed upon physical activity, PE and school sport and the provision of after school clubs, school sport teams; to include the influence of the media promoting key public policy messages
- Social factors shaping family life e.g. parents' employment commitments impacting on time and resources available to support coresearchers' physical activity interests; the family home and neighbourhood determining accessibility of safe activity spaces for self-directed active play; accessibility of activity programmes / clubs
- The accessibility of community sport/physical activity clubs and programmes in holidays and term time; the values associated with clubs and programmes e.g. whether highly competitive or founded on fun and participation etc.
- Cultural and belief-based social systems that prescribed customs and practices which shaped family commitments, timetables and individual behaviours.

Coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity were indirectly shaped by the national policy environment for children's physical activity, health, well-being and personal development in England; mediated through the other systems such as family, school and community clubs supporting physical activity opportunities. The policy environment (macrosystem) comprised a number of integrated strategies and policies comprising:

- Children's health and wellbeing policy and strategic practices
- PE and School Sport strategic policy and practices
- National community sport and physical activity policy including national governing body for sport policy and strategic practices

I will identify key factors in each level of the social systems which impacted coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity and these are illustrated in Figure 23 at the close of Section 7.3.4.

7.3 Socioecological factors and coresearchers'

conceptualisation of physical activity

In this section I investigate themes in coresearchers' data which described factors shaping their physical activity comprising: 'Impact of family'; 'Demands on time and energy' and 'Accessibility of resources'. These themes revealed socioecological factors in coresearchers' immediate settings (microsystems) and interactions of settings (mesosystems) acting upon coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences. I then go on to consider the wider institutional (exosystem) and societal (macrosystem) settings shaping coresearchers' immediate physical activity settings.

7.3.1 Impact of family: immediate and extended family

Coresearchers' immediate family settings contribute strongly to children's participation in physical activity (Mackintosh et al., 2011; Mandic et al., 2012) and how they develop their conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity. Parents encourage physical activity by facilitating access, acting as role models for physical activity behaviours, encouraging physical activity and regulating their children's activities (Mulhall, Reis and Begum, 2011; Gilliland *et al.*, 2015). Each coresearcher featured the involvement of immediate and extended family to facilitate their chosen physical activity pursuits. Parents, particularly Mothers responded to coresearchers' requests to pursue activities by identifying and enrolling coresearchers onto courses and into clubs. Mothers also scheduled domestic programmes to accommodate activities and transported their children to and from activities.

Parents were also role models, from whom coresearchers 'learn their lifestyle and values' (Sääkslahti, 2014, p. S35). Parents' capacities to be role models for physically active lifestyles depended upon their knowledge, their own experiences and enthusiasm for physical activity. Each of the coresearchers' parents valued physical activity as part of their children's day to day lives. Their knowledge and experience of physical activity varied greatly. Five parents (and three grandparents) played or had played competitive

sport regularly and/or coached sports (three of whom were professionally involved in sport / sport and physical activity promotion). Parents who had positive experiences and ongoing enthusiasm for participating in structured sports also understood the structure and system of structured sport participation; they had a strong body of active cultural capital. This potentially better equipped parents, to introduce their children to sport and physical activity opportunities, for instance enrolling coresearchers into academy level football (Harry, Danny and Gareth); to community netball (Georgia) and a range of multi-sport activities (Reilly).

Whilst some studies were inconclusive, these findings supported studies which suggested a link between more active parents and more active children (Xiao Lin Yang, Telama and Laakso, 1996; Welk, Wood and Morss, 2003; Wagner *et al.*, 2004; Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006; Coulter and Woods, 2011; Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2012; Dearth-Wesley *et al.*, 2012); and found positive associations between role modelling active behaviours and children's participation in physical activity, particularly between fathers and sons (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006; Downward, Hallmann and Pawlowski, 2014). That positive association between family support and children's activity was particularly strong for girls (Harris, 2015) and Reilly, Georgia and IA benefitted from Mothers as active role models engaged in structured sports. IA for instance was particularly enthusiastic about following her Mother's interest in learning to water ski and accompanying her at her club.

Older siblings were also role models. Reilly for instance had two older Sisters whom she followed into Cheerleading Club. Vixen Swift joined her Sister climbing trees and enjoying forest school. Jay's adult Brother was a skilled footballer who taught and inspired Jay to practice football tricks.

Structured sport and team games were not part of Vixen Swift's, Jay's and BG 's parents' physical activity experiences or chosen by the coresearchers in their free choice pursuits. Role modelling was not just about current parental participation in structured team sports. Vixen Swift's Mother no longer participated in horse riding but understood the culture of

horse riding from previous experience; the equipment, system of enrolling in horse riding lessons and learning to ride and associated activities. She was well-equipped to support her daughter to learn to ride and develop her interest in horse riding as an activity. Jay and BG meanwhile participated in recreational swimming encouraged by their Mother, who swam regularly for exercise. In addition, walks were a routine family activity for Vixen Swift, Reilly, BG and Jay. Parents role-modelled enjoyment of playing in water and experiencing the outdoors as a part of day to day life.

Parents' impact upon coresearchers' physical activity goes beyond role modelling. Some studies have found simple parental support more strongly associated with children's physical activity than parents' own physical activity behaviours (Downward, Hallmann and Pawlowski, 2014). Parental support encouragement is widely accepted as a key motivator of children's physical activity. The ability and interest of family members to encourage and support is important to children's participation in physical activity (Department of Health Physical Activity Health Improvement and Protection, 2011; Mulhall, Reis and Begum, 2011). Lack of parental support is a barrier to physical activity (Mackintosh et al., 2011). In this study, support and encouragement was available not only from parents but also a number of grandparents and older siblings. For instance, Harry and Gareth's grandparents supported their football and rugby club activities and matches as they had the coresearchers' Fathers before them. Vixen Swift's grandparents supported her informal drama performance.

Parents' impacts on coresearchers' physical activity as active play

This study particularly highlighted the importance to coresearchers of parental support to active play and as time to engage with family, associated with humour and teasing. Social systems impacting human development behaviours accommodate two-way or reciprocal social relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). Unprompted, Harry's Mother expressed her enjoyment of playing with Harry. Closer inspection of Harry's data demonstrated a number of occasions when she had facilitated play activities such as garden water fights. Parents

encouraged coresearchers in a range of play activities including rough and tumble, make-believe, outdoor and creative challenges. Mutual fun and enjoyment were visible in laughter and teasing emanating from the novelty and physicality of activities. The potential for virtuous cycles of increased family physical activity (Brown et al., 2016) was seen as parents or grandparents entered into play, leading or being led into mutual fun and enjoyment and further play.

The engagement of significant adults by coresearchers in their active play demonstrated a less highlighted role for parents in children's physical activity and also demonstrated ways coresearchers used their agency. Parents, grandparents and other close family adults were engaged by coresearchers as additional, resources to enhance their activities.

These trusted adults provided access to new movement sensations and activity such as shoulder rides, play fights, and a holiday rough and tumble play in swimming pool and other water pursuits. Parental participation appeared to enhance coresearchers' fun by providing opportunities for behaviours, such as cheekiness and teasing the adults, which were not generally accessible to coresearchers with adults in their school programmes or club-related experiences. The phenomenon was identified in the first pilot study in the way children engaged adult holiday activity staff in their play. For instance, getting staff to lift and bounce them down in the inflatable castle. Children in the pilot study and the coresearchers in this study used their agency to manipulate and engage others in these activities. They were active agents in shaping family fun activity.

Extended family impact on coresearchers' physical activity

Membership of an extended family impacted coresearchers time for free choice physical activity when they had to fulfil responsibilities to socialise with grandparents, aunts and uncles. These times however often involved leading home-based play activities with younger siblings and cousins; and socialising on walks and outings with aunts, uncles and grandparents. Whilst physical activity interests of the extended family impacted the

choices available to coresearchers at these times, coresearchers deployed their imagination and agency within settings to pursue enjoyable physical activity.

Coresearchers were also expected to fulfil responsibilities for the care of their pets and dog walking. Regular dog walking appeared to coincide very strongly with rules Mothers had for getting the coresearchers outdoors daily, particularly during school holidays and particularly where gardens and access to outside play space were limited. Rather than placing a limitation upon coresearchers' choices and experiences, however, these routines appeared to provide rich environments and opportunities for imaginative activities. Reilly for instance created racing games against their family dog, supporting studies which identify the positive impact of family dogs on physical activity levels. Jay engaged in a wide range of imaginative games re-enacting his computer and YouTube videos.

A corollary to getting coresearchers out daily was found in parental regulation of some coresearchers' screen time, often in favour of being active and getting outdoors. Two coresearchers were not sufficiently interested in screen-based entertainment for parents to implement restrictions. Four of the remaining seven coresearchers had scheduled periods of restricted screen-based activity time (a typical example being unable to use a screen on school nights).

Holidays and outings

Holidays and outings provided different physical spaces, but also different socio-psychological settings where both parents and children were taken away from their institutionalised lives. This provided a time/space Danny specifically identified as being when the family as a whole could enjoy trying new activities which they didn't have time for at home. Parents shaped holidays and outings to provide activities which coresearchers enjoyed. For instance, water flumes and swimming pools were essential features of most coresearchers' holidays. Coresearchers chose novel activities, such as footgolf, bowling, pool parties and outdoor water sports as birthday treats. Not only was

more time available but the quality of time on holidays and outings was different. These were family activities when both parents and coresearchers were devoted to family recreation, for the purpose of re-energising and recovering from the obligations of work and school and other essential activities of day to day living.

In summary, family membership on coresearchers' physical activities impacted strongly upon coresearchers' choices of free-choice pursuits, shaping their conceptualisations of physical activity and experiences. Parents practically facilitated, role-modelled, encouraged and sometimes regulated activities. However, coresearchers were each agentic within the family setting and in creating their physical activity opportunities. Socialising with extended family members provided opportunities for imaginative physical activity. Parents and close family members such as grandparents were welcome active playmates who were engaged by the coresearchers to enhance their activity experiences. Holidays and outings provided special recreational time/space and settings for novel mutual active play and time to connect socially and psychologically with parents and siblings through fun and enjoyment. Coresearchers often initiated and drew parents into playing for instance Harry initiated water fights with his [mM](#)other and Jay and BG used pester power successfully to visit park climbing and play equipment.

7.3.2 Demands on time and energy

Coresearchers' data also identified the impacts of busy school and family lives on their conceptualisation and experiences of physical activity. Demands on time and energy applied to both coresearchers and their parents on whom they were highly reliant to access physical activity outside the home, Time was mediated by parent's employment situations, by family commitments; by coresearchers' commitments to schooling and parents' attitudes to their children's schooling.

Vixen Swift, for instance, foregrounded her long school days and almost daily games or PE as a key factor in associating her free-choice time with activities which were relaxing and creative. Whilst Danny's parents were highly supportive of his extensive range of

activities, they were also keen that he undertook additional academic (Kumon mathematics) and cultural studies (learning Punjabi) and also participated in occasional activities at their Gurdwara religious centre. Some studies raise concerns about over scholarisation of childhood (Glenn, Knight and Holt, 2012) and school curricular infringing children's rights to play, by intruding on children's free time and 'giving an implicit message that play is wasting valuable learning time' (Cooper, Montgomery and Sheehy, 2018, pp. 112–3). Vixen Swift's unnecessary apology for having had a lazy day on her iPad on one occasion supported that message. Simultaneously this comment could have reflected well-publicised concerns about children's screen time. Other coresearchers had standard school hours, and at most two lessons of PE a week, but created equally active schedules participating in a range of community sports clubs and activities after school, at weekends and in holidays. The significant difference however was that these were chosen physical activities and might be seen to be formative in the coresearchers' activity choices and habits in later life.

All of the coresearchers' parents worked at least part time. Each of the coresearchers' Mothers tried to work hours to enable them to care for their children after school and to transport coresearchers to their various community activities. This was harder for BG and Jay's Mother and Father who occasionally had evening work commitments, which could restrict their ability to transport their children to and from activities. This may have contributed to BG and Jay's stronger focus upon family and home based activities. Each of the coresearchers except IA had siblings who placed equal demands upon the family unit to support their various activities. This resulted in parents sharing complex schedules to transport two or more children to and from different activities.

On occasion coresearchers' time in school was extended. For example, Georgia and Gareth occasionally attended after school care club, and Vixen Swift and IA were occasional/part-time school boarders. Whilst extra-curricular time in school provided recreational active play space, and a range of activities for active play and playing games, such as informal football, there were still rules and regulation of behaviours that did not

provide the freedoms of home-based activity. For instance, in the pilot studies, I observed rough and tumble play being curbed by holiday play scheme staff and exploration of climbing equipment restricted by play time supervisors. Children can be compliant in relinquishing agency to assist working parents and/or conform to the routines of their schooling. In this 'role' coresearchers were operating as part of the family unit. Whilst they enjoyed such clubs and sessions, coresearchers did not necessarily identify these experiences as free play but 'rather what they did when parents were (still) working' (Glenn, Knight and Holt, 2012). Some coresearchers spent time with Grandparents as part of after school care. Whilst free of the rules of a school setting, coresearchers' activity was still framed by their setting. For Reilly, for instance, this gave her access to a vast range of resources for arts and crafts pursuits, because her Grandparents were equipped as professional child carers.

Three of the nine coresearchers revealed that they had had to give up an activity to make room for another i.e. time was a finite resource. More significantly, three decided not to take up an activity because they wanted some free unstructured time at home with their family during their school week. BG's and Jay's chosen physical activities were primarily home or family-based and they did not exhibit a craving for more family time although activities outside the family were available to them. Each attended occasional after school clubs and BG attended weekly Brownie meetings which involved games and activities.

In summary, coresearchers' physical activity choices were made in the context of being part of busy family units, which had to accommodate schoolwork, parental work demands, obligations for caring for wider family and sibling activities. Busy coresearchers were highly committed to a range of structured community activities. However, they also used their own agency to give up structured activities in favour of family time demonstrating the value they placed upon time with their families. Families with greater financial resources were also more time poor having to spend more time at work resulting in coresearchers spending longer in structured activities and school. These differences were mitigated by different but strong active cultural capital all parents demonstrated in the way they

facilitated their physical activities, encourage and supported coresearchers' participation and actively engaged with them.

7.3.3 Accessibility of resources

Coresearchers' data referred to space, facilities, equipment and financial resources to facilitate coresearchers' choices of physical activity, which included access to term time and holiday clubs and programmes. In this study none of the coresearchers had the freedom to visit community activity spaces or programmes unsupervised. They were therefore reliant on parents and other adults to transport and facilitate access to these choices of activities. This placed an even stronger importance upon the family home and garden for physical activity.

Garden equipment, particularly trampolines significantly increased coresearchers' home-based garden activity. Harry, Danny, Gareth, Jay and occasionally Reilly all had small football goals and skills practice equipment in their gardens to practice their skills and play at football. Jay and Beach Girl had very limited space at home for physical activity but with Danny, Harry, Gareth and Georgia, Jay showed a range of physical activities and BG pursued her gardening interests in the modest space available to them. At the same time Vixen Swift and IA had considerable outdoor space at home with potential for a range of activities, but provided no data suggesting they were active in their gardens. Reilly specifically identified the location of her home on a busy main road as a limitation to her home-based pursuits and described her garden as unsuitable for activities other than outdoor barbeques, relaxing and playing rough and tumble with the family dog before school. In this study other activities pursued by coresearchers mitigated the impact of restricted home-based facilities. For instance, Reilly, Jay and BG enjoyed daily short outings during holidays and weekends, deliberately facilitated by their [mM](#)others, which compensated for restricted outdoor space at home.

Research widely reported limited space in homes and gardens, less activity equipment and greater access to computer use (Tandon *et al.*, 2012), and restricted freedom to roam

in busy urban communities (Stone *et al.*, 2014) were associated family lower socioeconomic status and impacted negatively on children's perceptions (Seabra *et al.*, 2013) experiences and levels of physical activity (Santos, Esculcas and Mota, 2004; Peralta *et al.*, 2019). This study however supported other research that found correlations were inconclusive (Kelly *et al.*, 2006; Stalsberg and Pedersen, 2010). Coresearchers' parents mitigated the impact of limited home space and financial resources. They actively engaged with their children facilitating outdoor and nature based activities and found affordable non-commercial activity venues for instance for swimming. In addition, coresearchers were imaginative and created active pursuits in limited space; extended simple outdoor nature-based visits into adventurous games experiences which Jay in particular linked to his computer gaming interests. Simultaneously not all coresearchers who had access to large gardens and safe rural environments to roam used those spaces for activity. Coresearchers choices were impacted by complex interactions of different factors guiding their free-choice time activities.

Coresearchers developed their interest in home-based activities by going on to pursue them in community clubs and activities. For instance, Harry developed his enjoyment of garden trampolining by joining his community trampoline club and Jay aspired to take his love of climbing at home to join Parkour club when older. BG and Georgia meanwhile developed their interests in gardening and drama from school to home and a community drama group respectively.

However, there were accessibility issues associated with attending after school and community clubs. Cost of accessing clubs and activities were a potential barrier to some coresearchers' parents and time to transport coresearchers to activities a general challenge.

In spite of a national policy of investment in extra-curricular school sport clubs and competition aimed at helping children to get more active, the coresearchers' experiences of school sport varied greatly. For Vixen Swift, participation in a school team was mandatory as part of her extended school days. She reported generally liking games, but

really disliking PE which she associated with having to carry out a 'bleep test' at the beginning and end of term. Jay's experience of PE persuaded him that football and rugby were overly taxing and could potentially involve getting hurt. Danny, however, thrived in sampling a variety of different sports and participated in a range of extra-curricular school sports clubs which were linked to the programme of national School Games competitions. Danny enjoyed the variety of sports he could sample and valued the contribution each could make to his primary interest in mastering football.

Some coresearchers were selected to play in school teams as one-off events. Reilly was selected for school athletic and tennis teams and Georgia for her school swimming team. These events were not rooted in regular participation in a school club or practicing as a team and it was clear that they had been picked as high performers for the one-off event. Georgia, however, practiced with her netball team which had succeeded in progressing through the School Games competition levels and was highly motivated by competition. IA trained with her school swimming team and participated during the study in her first duathlon (run and swim), encouraged by her swimming coach as a fun activity.

Other coresearchers did not identify extra-curricular school sports in their chosen pursuits. There was a lack of uniformity in the extra-curricular sports experiences available to the coresearchers. Some had access to clubs for recreational purposes whilst others were only engaged when needed for a school team competition. This finding supports reports that some schools continue to compete for time in busy school timetables to deliver nationally targeted PE and school sport targets (Association for Physical Education, 2015).

Opportunities for coresearchers to participate in community sports and physical activity clubs and programmes also depended upon accessibility. Accessibility was impacted not only by parents' ability to support children to find clubs and transport coresearchers to sessions; but also the cost of sessions and associated equipment and clothing (Steinmayr, Felfe and Lechner, 2011).

Four of the coresearchers lived in rural locations some distance from some of their activities, whilst five lived within towns or cities which were well served locally with a wide range of different activity clubs and programmes. This study did not identify a simple relationship between the location of activities and participation. Some coresearchers were involved in activities local to home. For instance, Vixen Swift and Georgia attended their village drama clubs whilst at other times they were both driven to activities some way away.

Harry, Danny and Gareth each attended community football clubs and/or rugby club, where they experienced mastering the skills of the game and enjoyed competing in teams. In this environment participants can experience a sense of competence, the opportunity to socialise and gain psychological support, and the opportunity to experience a mastery-orientated learning environment (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007a). Children who perceive themselves as competent, skilled performers can enjoy and have highly motivating experiences (Huang and Gao, 2008). However for some, the structure and system of community sport can mitigate against fun and enjoyment, and highly prescriptive sports programmes do not necessarily result in increased or sustained physical activity (Kuen, 2011; Gao, Podlog and Huang, 2013). These two contrasting experiences describe Harry's positive experience and Gareth and Danny's negative experience of stepping up to academy level football. The pressure of participating in performance sport, the rigours of training and of competition, competitively-orientated coaches, negative feedback and inappropriate psychosocial support contributed to their negative experiences (Mccarthy and Jones, 2007a; Huang and Gao, 2008). Nonetheless this experience did not overall impact their conceptualisation of sport and physical activity generally. They used their agency to withdraw from experiences that no longer provided them with enjoyment and continued to pursue positive competitive experiences in their other clubs and activities. Vixen Swift and Georgia made similar decisions with respect to horse riding having experienced falls and injury.

The structure of PE and community sport has been identified as a barrier to participation for some cultural minority groups (Pearce, 1999; Vu *et al.*, 2006; Barr-Anderson *et al.*, 2017; Edwards, 2019; Gu *et al.*, 2019). However, in this study Danny's Sikh cultural heritage, family and community support had a positive impact upon the breadth and variety of physical activity he chose. His cultural roots and family engagement in his activities strongly shaped his experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity. Reilly and Georgia did not experience the same kind of structural community support for their physical activity choices.

Gendered inequalities in provision for girls' community physical activity

There were clear gender inequities in the availability of community sports which both Reilly and Georgia directly experienced. The infrastructure of community sport for the coresearchers was dominated by football, and football participation was dominated by boys. Whilst PE and school sport were delivered as mixed gender sports, girls enter a highly male domain to play in a community football or tag rugby sides. My observation of Danny's, Gareth's and Harry's football matches all demonstrated that girl players were a tiny minority; and always a lone girl in an otherwise male team. This gave credence to Reilly feeling judged by wanting to play competitive sports as a girl. There was no infrastructure for the female coresearchers to participate in community football with other girls. There was a similar lack of infrastructure for Georgia to pursue her love of netball, even though this was a female dominated game. Georgia had to wait until she reached 12 years old and was eligible to join her community club.

At an interpersonal level Harry, Gareth and Danny directly benefited from Fathers (and Grandfathers) who role modelled and supported their sons' participation in football. Coresearchers did not highlight friends generally as a major influence upon their choices of physical activity. However, Harry, Gareth and Danny were embedded in a male culture in which football was a default activity in school playtimes and other casual recreational time/spaces. Reilly highlights that this was not the case for girls in her experience.

Reilly and Georgia appeared to highlight a structural problem for girls interested in community based team sports. It appeared that few girls in their social groups opted to play in sports such as football which were highly male dominated, and this led to a lack of sufficient girls to start new clubs or programmes for them.

Unlike other literature investigating physical activity in specific population groups, studies consistently reported that girls were less active than boys (Santos, Esculcas and Mota, 2004; Vu *et al.*, 2006; McGovern *et al.*, 2020). Notwithstanding, structural barriers to the girls pursuing their sport interests, Reilly and Georgia continued to seek physical activity experiences which challenged them to master skills and experience a sense of achievement. Reilly pursued Cheerleading and Georgia supported any school-based opportunity to compete which included swimming and netball. They had to pursue their interests in being physically active differently but their conceptualisation of physical activity and the experiences they sought remained constant.

7.3.4 Policy and institutionalised factors

Coordinated national policies across UK Government Departments responsible for Health, Education and Sport established the policy environment for children's physical activity in England. Policies established national structures for funding and delivery of extra-curricular school and community physical activities which coresearchers could have chosen to access. Every Secondary school in England was funded to support their Primary feeder schools with specialist physical education support involving systems of intra and inter school competitions from local to national level supported by PE specialists. However, in many schools, PE staff competed for time to deliver the nationally targeted minimum of two hours of High Quality PE&SS per week with other school priorities (Association for Physical Education, 2015). This may have accounted for coresearchers' varied experiences of the availability of after school sport and activity clubs and the rather ad hoc experiences some had of competition.

Coresearchers as a group featured community rather than extra-curricular school physical activity in their data. National community sport and physical activity policies established the funding and structuring of sport and physical activity in the community via National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport. This system of community sport was also highly reliant upon volunteer coaches which impacted coresearchers in two key ways. Firstly, there was a gender inequality resulting in a lack of opportunity for Reilly and Georgia to participate in community sports in which they were interested. Secondly, community sport club participation across coresearchers was strongly related to immediate family ties to clubs and activities where parents and grandparents were coaches and highly involved in the running of activities. This mediated the impact of the policy environment structuring coresearchers experiences. Family engagement was a far more important factor in coresearchers' choices to participate than the fact that policy commitments had simply made the provision available.

Experiences of participating in club sports and programmes were highly reliant upon the coaching staff, and the values and aims of individual clubs. Coresearchers generally appeared to have positive experiences of their chosen activities. However, it was notable that the highly competitive influence of professional football club academies appeared to coincide for two coresearchers with coaching environments that caused the coresearchers to give up.

The national policy environment was accompanied by significant media support promoting increases in children's levels of physical activity and the establishment of physically active habits for life. In discussion coresearchers demonstrated that they were aware of promotion of physical activity as part of personal, social health and education (PSHE) school lessons but there was no evidence that coresearchers made a direct link with this to their physical activity choices. Parents demonstrated more awareness of physical activity as part of health and wellbeing policy and had an interest in ensuring for instance that their children went out into the fresh air every school holiday day, visited parks at weekends if children had not been outside and active already.

One set of parents mentioned that they had focused upon encouraging their child to be active to maintain a healthy weight in the past. Two other parents talked about getting children outdoors every day in school holidays. Each of the coresearchers was at least reasonably active with some extremely active. It may have been that public messaging and marketing had been internalised. Otherwise it was unclear whether public policy discourses, national messages and campaigning (such as Change4Life) directly impacted coresearchers' families at all.

Figure 23 shows the layers of social systems that shape the socioecological environment in which coresearchers made their physical activity choices. In the outer level the highly regulated strategic environment impacted the different institutions (PESS, NGBS, commercial physical activity providers, professional football academies, immediate and extended family and religious/cultural community groups) which themselves shaped the specific settings in which coresearchers experienced physical activity

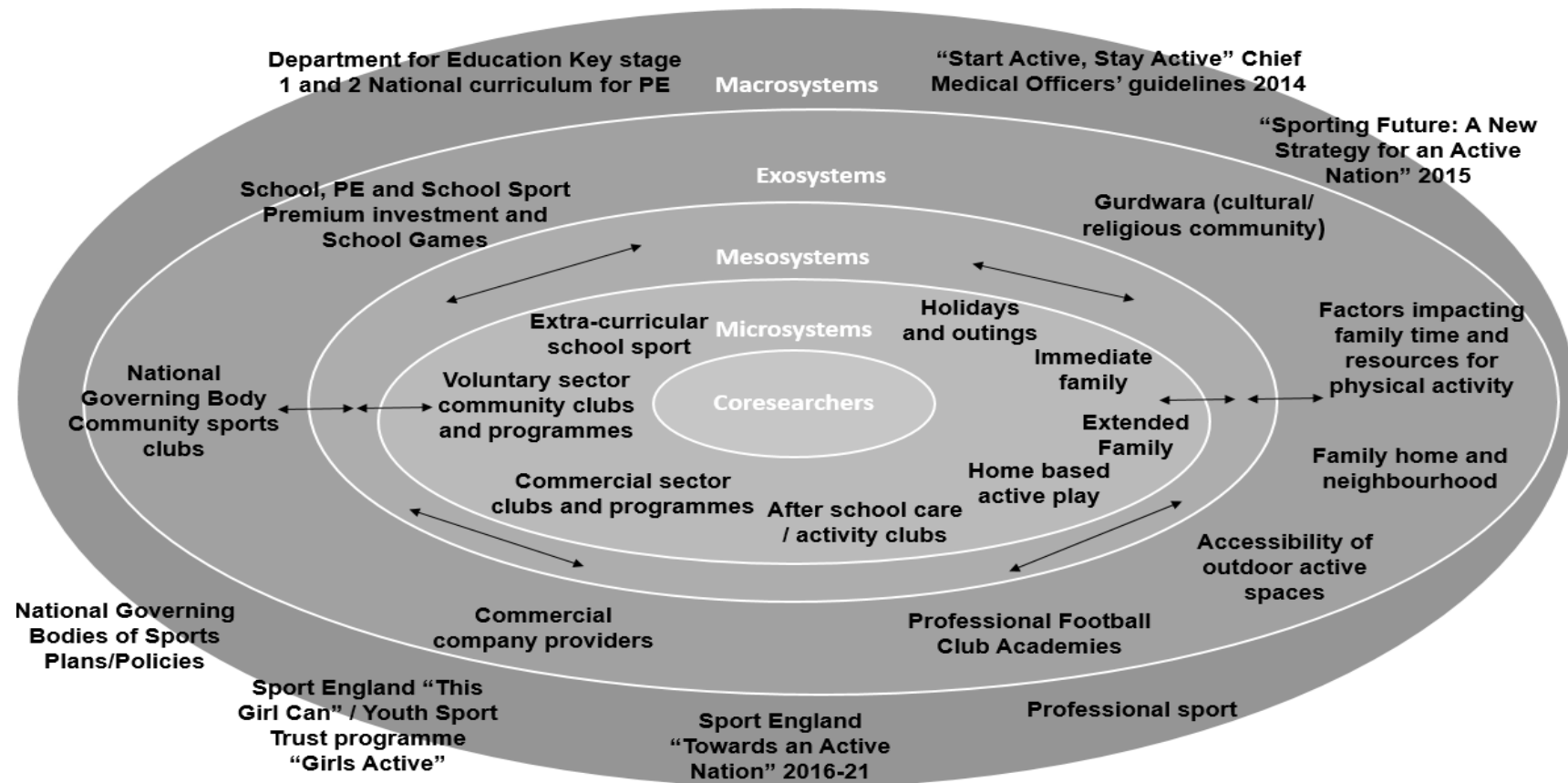


Figure 23 Socioecological factors impacting coresearchers' experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity

7.3.5 Summary: RQ3 The socioecological factors impacting coresearchers' experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity

Coresearchers' experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity were characterised in Figure 20, in a continuum from 'active play' through 'creative challenges', 'playing at structured sports/physical activity' to 'mastering activity'. Coresearchers experiences and conceptualisations of physical activity as mastery of activity were associated with structured extra-curricular and community sport and physical activity. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development reveals socioecological and sociocultural factors with potential to impact coresearchers' experiences and conceptualisations of their structured activity. Within the immediate setting of community and extra-curricular school sport, structures and systems of participation were characterised by competition and participation for personal performance. The availability and accessibility of clubs and programmes depended on the availability of community volunteers. Participation in clubs depended upon parental attitudes towards activities, financial resources, time and money to access sessions.

By contrast conceptualisations of physical activity as self-directed activity (comprising 'active play', 'setting and conquering creative challenges' and 'playing at structured sport/physical activity') were more strongly impacted upon by immediate family resources. These included parental time free of working commitments, space in the home/garden and/or accessible in the neighbourhood and finance. All coresearchers' parents were aware of UK Government concerns about children's activity levels, but they had no concerns about their own children's access to sufficient physical activity. One parent offered concerns about the pressures that appeared to be upon children to fulfil both academic responsibilities as well as a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Time for active play was curtailed by the increased structuring of coresearchers' day to day lives, either for academic purposes or for managing parents' work commitments wherein structured activities provided child-care.

The application of the socioecological framework to coresearcher's data highlighted potential influences upon their experiences of PA, for instance the availability of community clubs to pursue their sporting interests. However, analysis also revealed that coresearchers used their agency to make choices which mitigated factors such as the availability of home-based space, facilities and resources to support activities. There was evidence to suggest that availability of facilities did not impact coresearchers' developing conceptualisations of physical activity and the experiences they sought. The dominant factor across coresearchers was the impact of parental cultural active capital upon their developing conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity. In particular, the ability and disposition of parents not only to encourage but to engage with coresearchers in their chosen activities in pursuit of fun and enjoyment.

During the study, further policy developments were published by Sport England which contributes to the wider media resonating messages about the benefits of physical activity. (2016a). The findings of this study would support the new policy direction for placing increased importance upon family activity, and also upon fun and enjoyment as a planned outcome of physical activity programmes.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter I return to research questions to consider the consequences of coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity (RQ1 and 2) along with the consequences of socioecological factors on coresearchers' choices and structuring of their physical activity (RQ3). I then reflect upon the aim of the research: to explore whether working towards a new child-guided participatory research approach might assist in revealing new insights. I review the impact of the AChiG approach upon research findings and reflect upon defining elements of the AChiG research model with reference to Urquhart and Mason's (2001) framework. In the closing sections of the chapter I consider challenges and limitations of the study, the original contributions that the study has made to knowledge and review ethical issues. Finally, I make recommendations for future research and further development of the AChiG methodological approach.

8.2 Addressing the research questions

8.2.1 Consequences of coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity in their chosen pursuits (RQ1)

Coexistence and interaction of active and inactive pursuits

Inductively coded themes in coresearchers' data (Section 6.2) revealed coresearchers conceptualised much of their chosen physical activity in highly fluid ways. The interaction of different pursuits sprang up in response to coresearchers' prevailing time/space settings. Active and inactive pursuits were mutually supportive each stimulating the other. Coresearchers alternated between active and inactive pursuits often driven by high levels of imagination and creativity stimulated by their consumption of social media, computer games and screen-based activities

Coresearchers did not always differentiate between active or inactive pursuits. Physical activity competed for time with a wide range of arts and crafts, socialising and relaxation activities. Inductive analysis of coresearchers' data about their chosen pursuits demonstrated that they were often driven by the underlying experiences of their choices rather than the objective of getting active. Much of their free-choice time physical activity was a by-product embedded in play activities driven in pursuit of fun and enjoyment. In other words, physical activities (alongside other chosen pursuits) could simply be a conduit to experiences which were fun and enjoyable often as a release from their structured and disciplined school lives.

The coexistence and interaction of pursuits, the layered, spontaneous and free flowing nature of coresearchers' active and inactive pursuits challenge dualistic approaches to the discussion of children's chosen pursuits such as, active or inactive; creative or sporty. A consequence of these findings is to recognise that there is value in the simultaneous and eclectic mix of free-choice pursuits coresearchers engaged in and also the importance of exercising imagination and creativity through:

- Provision of home and community multi-activity environments which support children's propensity to exercise imagination to engage in creative and active play
- Integration of screen-based computer gaming and popular children's culture in physical activity opportunities rather than dwell exclusively upon the potential ills of screen-based activities increasing sedentary time
- Development of physical activity experiences which give children the opportunity to exercise their imagination and creativity.

'Active play'; 'Setting and conquering creative challenges'; Playing at' sport and 'Mastery activities'

This group of coresearchers conceptualised physical activity as an opportunity for a much wider range of lived experiences than is generally conceptualised in existing research, as an opportunity to:

- Take part in imaginative, self-directed active play making full use of the space/time available- where physical activity is characterised as freedom and relief from the disciplines and structure of school
- Set and conquer creative challenges either alone or with close friends/siblings characterised by adventurousness and challenging body movements which could give rise to a sense of achievement
- 'Play at' a sport or physical activity adapted so that all participants can take part fully characterised by fun and enjoyment of socialising
- Master skills and activities in structured, coached/instructed environments which may involve hard work but provides a sense of achievement in mastery.

Coresearchers' data generated four different conceptualisations listed in the above sub-heading and described below. In my analysis in Section 6.4.4 I placed these four conceptualisations on a continuum characterised by coresearchers' degree of agency/external structuring of the activity. In framing the conceptualisations on a continuum, I acknowledged: a). a subjectivity in defining each conceptualisation, and b). the potential that other conceptualisations might be revealed in research with other coresearchers or even the same coresearchers on another occasion.

Describing physical activity as a continuum of different conceptualisations reflected this group of coresearchers' experiences and challenged a further traditionally dualistic way of conceptualising physical activity for instance as 'active play' or 'organised sport;' as 'participation' or 'competition'. Coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity were significantly defined by their experiences. The differentiation between conceptualisations revealed different characteristics of coresearchers' experiences, for instance different sources of fun and enjoyment, different catalysts and ways of exercising imagination and creativity.

8.2.2 Consequences of revealing coresearchers' experiences of their chosen physical activity RQ2

This study identified seven inter-related strands of experiences within coresearchers' chosen physical activities (Section 6.6, shown schematically in Figure 22). Each strand of experience was lived out in coresearchers free-choice physical activity in different ways, characteristic of each of the coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity. This study also clearly demonstrated the place of fun and enjoyment supporting coresearchers experiences and underpinning all coresearchers' chosen physical activity.

Sources of fun and enjoyment

Sources of fun and enjoyment differed with different conceptualisations of physical activity. There was a greater focus within the coresearchers' free choice time upon physical activity characterised by higher levels of self-direction and agency and lower levels of external structuring. Active play, setting and conquering creative challenges, and playing at structured sports/activities were each characterised by being self-directed and intrinsically motivated by the enjoyment of the activity itself.

The study went on to identify further nuanced sources of fun and enjoyment which arose primarily from raised affective states associated with socialising with close family; the embodiment and physicality of activities and the application of imagination and creativity which are briefly summarised below.

Physical activity enjoyment was often a proxy for, and way of, connecting psychosocially with parents and close friends, characterised by shared humour, teasing and silliness. Encouragement from and, even more importantly, the engagement of parents in pursuits enhanced coresearchers enjoyment. Virtuous cycles of 'active play' or 'playing at' games and sports could evolve where parents and children engaged each other in mutually enjoyable activities. Raised affective states also accompanied embodied enjoyment of novel, imaginative and creative movement including the experience of activities outdoors. Again, this included parents, particularly Fathers, who engaged in rough and tumble play.

However embodied enjoyment was also identified in the data analysis where there was a range of adventurous and free-flowing movement activities often connected with the natural outdoor environments. For instance, one female coresearcher described hanging upside down by the knees feeling her long hair streaming down whilst another coresearcher described his excitement and physical sensations of practicing Parkour moves.

In conclusion raised affective states arose from coresearchers' imaginative and creative activities. These experiences were often adventurous in nature and sometimes stimulated by screen-based themes and popular childhood culture. Coresearchers vicariously lived out heroic adventures. This finding supports some research which suggests that rather than identifying screen-based entertainment as only harmful to physical activity levels there may be merit in recognising the potential for video and computer gaming to inspire or enhance physical activity (Future Foundation, 2015).

Construction of activity offers from coresearchers chosen physical activity experiences

Findings discussed in Section 6.6 supported existing research about children's experiences of physical activity and also provided five interesting new insights which may provide potential children's standpoints (Thomson and Gunter, 2007) about physical activity. Current practice in the promotion of children's physical activity has tended to start with an existing sport or physical activity programme. Practitioners often then try to shape the activity to motivate children's sustained participation. By starting with the experiences children themselves seek from their physical activity it may be possible to build physical activity programmes which are more intrinsically motivational. Taking this approach programmes of physical activities might focus upon:

- Opportunities for imaginative, creative active play in which children shape their own activities associated with novel environments/equipment, including the outdoors, can lead to new and exciting movement sensations. Children were

drawn to playing out imaginative and adventure games compiled from a range of media sources and child culture where outdoor climbing equipment became castles to be stormed and large inflatable equipment the scene for gangster hold-ups.

- Family recreation sessions which engage parents in fun games and challenges with children reflected in coresearchers data for instance in garden water fights and in parent/child sessions learning to canoe and surfboard together
- Movement and skills challenges which carry a sense of adventure and (managed) risk for instance championed by coresearchers who enjoyed practicing Parkour moves on outdoor garden trampolines
- Informal opportunities to gather to play diverse sports in non-competitive recreational environments, which do not require commitment to a particular team but gives children (particularly girls) access to fun team and individual sports and activities.
- Opportunities to experience a sense of achievement from performing well in a sport or activity involving commitment to other team members hard work and challenge supported by a positive coaching/instructional environment. In particular the expansion of the network of community football opportunities for boys in England to include equivalent access to football and other team games in which girls wish to compete

In Table 11 I have distilled key features of coresearchers' experiences of physical activity associated with each of the coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity. The table provides insights from coresearchers into the breadth and interconnectedness of their lived experiences across the different conceptualisations of physical activity; and the way that experiences underpin and provide sources of fun and enjoyment. With further research there may be potential to develop and populate the table with more examples of children's experiences to continue to develop insights into the physical activity experiences in which children choose to participate. With this knowledge and increased understandings practitioners and policy makers may identify new ways of providing

physical activity environments spaces/times which will appeal to a greater number of children to improve physical activity levels at population level. However self-determined behaviours and attitudes towards physical activity were impacted by socioecological factors which were the subject of the final research question addressed next.

Table 11 Experiences associated with coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity

		ACTIVE PLAY	SETTING AND CONQUERING CHALLENGES	'PLAYING AT' A SPORT	MASTERY OF ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS
Degrees of structure and coresearcher agency	ACTIVITY STRUCTURE	Unstructured; spontaneous; fluid	Coresearcher devised in response to environment; sometimes spontaneous but also developed over time	Collaborative structuring with others (sometimes facilitated by an adult)	Structured by a supervising adult
	CORESEARCHER'S AGENCY	Self-directed activity; high levels of agency	Self-directed activity; high levels of agency	Contributed to organisation of activity; free to drop in and out	Levels of agency controlled by supervising adult
Coresearchers' experiences of each conceptualisation of physical activity	CONNECTING WITH FAMILY/FRIENDS/COMMUNITY	Typically, with family/close friends; connecting psychosocially in shared humour and teasing	Typically, alone or with siblings/close friends; performing to spectators or connecting with others in challenge	Socialising with a broader group of friends and other children	Connecting with team mates and coaches through team/community values
	EXERCISING CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION	Highly imaginative leading to the construction of creative games and movement	Creative movements often inspired by, YouTube or computer gaming	Expressed in role play within the activity	Expressed tactically and in the skills of the game
	EMBODIED EXPERIENCES OF ACTIVITY	Characterised by rough and tumble play; free flowing, social and spontaneous	Adventurous; testing own physical skills and motility	Connecting with others in shared physical enterprise	Experiences of flow episodes; sense of mastery
	EXPRESSING SELF	Typically, free-flowing, chilling and performing	Expressing adventurousness; skills and ability	Positioning self within the social group	Identifying self with good performance
	SOURCES OF FUN AND ENJOYMENT	Intrinsic from movement sensations; social connectedness	Intrinsic from movement sensations and mastery of the challenge	Social connectedness with other participants	Mastery of skills and performing well

8.2.3 Consequences of socioecological factors impacting coresearchers' structuring and experiences of physical activity (RQ 3)

This section summarises the consequences of socioecological factors acting upon the coresearchers' structuring and experiences of physical activity using Bronfenbrenner's model of socioecological human development as a framework. Key socioecological factors impacting coresearchers' conceptualisations of physical activity are illustrated in Figure 23.

The consequences of the family social setting (microsystems impact)

The study supported the findings of other research that immediate family settings were the dominant influence upon each of the coresearchers' structuring and experiences of physical activity. Characteristics of the family setting comprised the active cultural capital available, the practical facilitation of coresearchers' activities and family resources to support physical activity participation. Family active cultural capital comprised the attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and understandings that parents (and other close family members) had about physical activity (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006; Birchwood, Roberts and Pollock, 2008). This impacted coresearchers' conceptualisation and experiences of physical activity through:

- Positive parental role modelling which positively influenced the development of coresearchers' own physical activity interests which coresearchers often mirrored
- Simple encouragement and engagement with coresearchers' activities which encouraged and increased coresearchers' enjoyment
- Parents being active and enjoying physical activity themselves supporting and significantly enhancing coresearchers' enjoyment of physical activity by being active with them. This led to mutually supportive play, teasing and shared humour. This was particularly apparent in holiday activities where parents were free of working constraints. It was a time coresearchers identified that they tried new activities together.

- Grandparents who contributed significantly to the active cultural capital of at least three coresearchers' families providing additional role models, support, encouragement and practical engagement with coresearchers in their chosen activities.

Practical support was needed from parents to identify and organise opportunities for coresearchers to pursue their expressed activity interests, to transport, finance and facilitate coresearchers' participation. Home space, equipment and financial resources available in coresearchers' family homes have been identified in the literature as key factors in children's activity levels. The home setting is particularly significant because this is where children have most agency to choose and structure free choice physical activity. However, in this study there was not a simple relationship between coresearchers' available home space, equipment and financial resources and their conceptualisation and chosen experiences of physical activity. Those with the most modest resources, Jay innovated the most physically active free choice pursuits alongside Danny who enjoyed far greater home-based resources. Meanwhile Jay's Sister Beach Girl chose more craft-based pursuits which was similar to Vixen Swift who also had greater home-based resources including a large safe family garden and family dog with which to play. There were two common features of the family social setting for each of the coresearchers. The first was the positive impact of their parental active cultural capital which supported coresearchers' interests and provided active although different role modelling and active lifestyles themselves. The second common feature was the coresearchers' reciprocal impact upon family activity. Coresearchers engaged their parents and grandparents in their active play and influenced choices of family outings, holiday activities.

The consequences of school demands; parent's work and wider family commitments and availability of community activity resources (Mesosystems and Exosystems impact)

School demands, parental work and other family commitments, family resources and the accessibility of opportunities to take part in organised community physical activity

impacted coresearchers' structuring and experiences of physical activity. These factors combined with parent/family cultural capital and resources for instance where both parents worked there were higher levels of financial resources to support family holidays and different activity experiences but less parental time to support coresearchers' activities.

The study identified significant demands from schooling on coresearchers' time and energy. This impacted particularly upon coresearchers' time for free active play due to:

- Long school days, homework and additional extra-curricular studies and academic pursuits which left some coresearchers' with little time or energy to take up physical activity in evenings and weekends
- Daily games or PE as part of two coresearchers' extended school day leaving one with depleted energy to give to activity in her free-choice time. This resulted in the majority of her physical activity experiences being directed and structured organised sport with less self-directed physical activity to establish self-motivated physical activity habits

Demands on parents' time because of working commitments also impacted some coresearchers who had on occasions to be cared for in extended after school clubs or with grandparents which limited their activity choices because they were away from the home-based facilities for activities. However, there was evidence of coresearchers making creative use of new surroundings such as Jay's use of his grown up Sister's lounge furniture to practice Parkour moves. The use of extended school clubs led to more structured time in which physical activities were governed by school rules of behaviour again reducing time for free active play. Parental time poverty across this coresearcher group varied. Families with high levels of home-based resources for physical activity were often time-poor whereas those with more modest resources could have greater time to engage with their children in their pursuits providing coresearchers with more free-choice time and less requirement to undertake structured activities which acted also as child-care.

The study showed that opportunities to be active in organised clubs and community programmes were mixed. Three of the nine coresearchers had more opportunities to take up a variety of activities than they had time available. Meanwhile Reilly and Georgia found some limitations in community provision which appeared to reflect a gendered difference in the provision of community sport opportunities for girls.

In this study wider family and community commitments involved socialising with friends and family. Coresearchers used their agency on these occasions to instigate fun, active play. Younger cousins and other family members focused coresearchers on play as a social bonding opportunity.

The consequences of public policy discourses impacting children's physical activity (Macrosystems impact)

As would be expected no evidence was found of a direct impact of public policy and promotion of key physical activity health and wellbeing messages on coresearchers' structuring and experience of their chosen physical activity. The study found that public policy to ensure coresearchers each had the opportunity to experience competition as part of their school sport offer was not being universally delivered. Across the coresearcher group coresearchers' experiences of PESS differed greatly and there was little evidence of the proposed outcomes of the PESS programme to encourage sustained commitment to physical activity. IA and Vixen Swift for instance received high levels of compulsory PE and experience of competitive sport. However, they did not pursue organised sport in their free choice time, choosing individual non-competitive pursuits. Reilly, Danny and Georgia took up every opportunity to take part in a wide range of sporadic opportunities to play in school competitions, but which did not connect to the sustained interests they developed for sport in their free choice time. Jay meanwhile avoided organised sport in and out of school pursuing his own innovative range of creative adventure play and skills challenges.

Coresearchers did not conceptualise their physical activity in the way public policy discourses framed children's physical activity as ways of enhancing health and wellbeing

and/or other personal and social development. Parents did allude to ensuring that their children were active and for instance took steps to ensure their children played outside each holiday day. It may be that public policy messages are failing to impact children's own understandings and beliefs about physical activity for health and wellbeing but that parents are mediating these messages.

In summary the study found that the key socioecological factors impacting coresearchers structuring and experiences of physical activity were located within the family social setting. Parents' cultural capital was fundamental in supporting how coresearchers conceptualised and experienced physical activity. The effective deployment of parents' knowledge and understanding of physical activity mediated the impact of socioecological factors such as the available home-based space and facilities for physical activities, financial resources and time available to practically organise and support their children in chosen activities. This finding was supported by coresearchers' data which emphasised chosen activities which provided opportunities to connect with close family, particularly parents, particularly active play, focused upon fun and enjoyment. Where parents had longer working hours, coresearchers spent longer in structured, environments, often associated with longer school days. This reduced free active play time which was prominent in all coresearchers' chosen activities. This finding supports the need to develop a wider range of community active play opportunities as identified in 8.2.1. Additionally coresearchers used their own agency to mitigate negative impacts of factors at all levels impacting their physical activity choices by innovating, creating and shaping physical activity which supported enjoyable embodied active experiences. This was revealed in a wide range of ways including made up garden trampoline games; computer gaming and Parkour media inspired adjuncts to country walks; the pursuit of footballing skills practices in the garden and dramatic selfie and slomo performances. Coresearchers' physical activities may have looked different, but their conceptualisations and experiences

had strong similarities providing them embodied experiences in the use of imagination and creativity in pursuit of fun and enjoyment.

8.3 Reflection on the AChiG research methodology

In this section I will return to the aim of the research to explore whether working towards a new child-guided participatory research approach might assist in revealing new insights.

To do this I reflect on key aspects of the research methodology (set out in Chapter 4) designed to empower coresearchers to help guide the conduct of research. I highlight key ways in which coresearchers influenced the conduct of research. This then leads to a review of the impact of the AChiG approach and insights that the model of research brought to findings. I close the section by returning to Urquhart and Mason's (2001) framework of children's participatory research models to suggest the location of the AChiG . Recommendations for the further development of the model are included in Section 8.8.

8.3.1 The impact of the reflexivity strategy upon the study

There is criticism of the use of reflexivity which leads to 'self-indulgence on the part of the researcher' (D'Cruz, et.al., 2007, p. 78) and simply reinforces the researcher's voice and power. For instance, the use of diaries is seen by some to be a way of diverting criticism by presenting acts of self-analysis as the root of new, more robust data. From this critical point of view, the use of boxes of text are seen to purportedly foreground research participants' voices in the writing up of studies but which actually only contain the researcher's interpretations (Gill, 1995; White, 2001). In the writing up of this study I have done the opposite. Coresearchers' voices have been foregrounded where they belong in the main body of the writing up of the study and boxes of reflexive thinking text contain my self-checking and challenging of potential bias within the research situation as an adult researcher.

The way I have used reflexive memos in the thesis to counteract these criticisms was to:

- Take a transparent planned and structured approach to reflexivity as an essential research tool which strengthened my participatory relationship with coresearchers and supported coresearchers' agency throughout the research process. Layers of reflexive questions were carefully prepared in anticipation of the sorts of assumptions and issues that could impact coresearchers' agency from the theoretical framing of the study through to its implementation (see Figure 1
- Use those focused reflexive questions to challenge potential assumptions and preconceptions in my spontaneous reactions working with coresearchers and their data. For instance, I challenged a rather maternalistic response to Harry when surprised by his insightful views at the same time espousing a belief in children's capabilities to be valued coresearchers (see Reflexive thinking 4); I highlighted my own wrong assumptions about Jay's enjoyment of park activities (Reflexive thinking 12) as well as checking my own behaviour as an observer within the research team (Reflexive thinking 8).
- Commit at the start of the study to make transparent a constant reflexivity throughout the study (Allen-Collinson, 2011a). In doing so to consciously remind myself of the impact of potential sources of bias that I might have been bringing to the conduct of the research because of my own conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity and my inadequacies as an adult to understand the coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences.

I recorded over 250 reflexive memos. Approximately a quarter of memos were written early in the study and focused upon the theoretical framing and preparation of the approach to the study. These related to the home-based context of the study and framing of the phenomenological/ autophenomenological research approach contained in the outer layers of the reflexive thinking model (see Figure 1). A further quarter were written during the study's fieldwork. These focused upon the inner two layers of the reflexive thinking model comprising reflections about the way

coresearchers wished to participate in the research and maintaining coresearcher agency in our researcher-coresearcher relationship (see Figure 1) but also provided space for me to reflect on my personal reactions to the data we were generating for instance when I was invited to observe coresearcher activities. The remaining half of memos were written during analysis and preparation of study findings. These primarily focused upon checking and challenging possible assumptions and supporting analysis with the coresearchers' data.

The impact of the reflexive strategy upon the conduct of the research was twofold. Firstly, it impacted me as an adult researcher. I came to this study already committed to the principles of empowering young people in research settings. However, placing researcher reflexivity as an essential ingredient at the heart of the AChiG participatory research model raised my awareness of potential adult researcher impact further and more widely across the research process. I had anticipated that the focus of reflexive memos would be upon the researcher-coresearcher collaborative relationship; the potential of researcher emotions to impact developing insights (D'Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez, 2007). However, in practice I grew a strong sense of the resilience of coresearchers as they met challenges and the way they used their (sometimes limited) agency associated with their physical activity choices and experiences. I was however surprised by the level of reflexive memos in both early planning and later analysis/findings stages of the study. Little reference was made to reflexivity in these stages of studies in the literature about participatory research. The focus in this study upon reflexivity in conducting the research appeared to have sensitised me to the impact of these stages of the research process upon coresearchers. Secondly, the reflexive strategy was specifically focused upon establishing and maintaining coresearcher agency and empowerment. The extent to which this was achieved is addressed in the following section.

8.3.2 Enabling and empowering the coresearcher

Coresearchers were enabled and empowered to guide research processes through the nurturing of participation within the study, selection of research methods and a constantly

reflexive approach to establishing and maintaining a collaborative coresearcher-researcher relationship.

Coresearchers' individual pathways through data collection and analysis

Table 12 shows the data collection methods selected across all coresearchers mapped against the research questions. Compared with the plan of data collection methods drafted as a starting point for discussions (Table 3) this shows coresearchers' preference for discussion associated with photos and videos, collaborative preparation of mind maps and the preparation of coresearchers' stories. Coresearchers' preferred video and photographs did not use activity monitoring watches as sources of data to elicit discussion. The table also demonstrates that facilitators of coresearchers' physical activities such as coaches, forest school leaders and parents were not chosen as sources of data. As the study progressed co-researcher's demonstrated enthusiasm in working with mind-maps. They used them to plan their data collection, to recall how they spent their free time and what they liked to do. Later co-researchers developed mind maps to build collages of photos and video screen grabs of their activities. Discussions about coresearchers' photos and videos were frequently accompanied by mind mapping activities and this led to the use of mind mapping for data analysis. The use of the collage mind maps gave coresearchers power over their own data. The shared task of cutting out and sticking on photographs from contact sheets provided a forum for discussion. As we worked coresearchers talked about their chosen photographs. This gave me a way of probing the meanings that coresearchers invested in their data without coresearchers

feeling “grilled” and like Thomas and O’Kane we found: ‘the meetings were more fun!’ (1998, p. 342).

Table 12 Coresearchers' selected data collection and analysis activities

Overarching research question: How do 7 to 11 years old children experience their chosen physical activity	Initial portfolio of data collection methods						Methods which developed with co-researchers	
	Coresearchers photographs and videos	Photo/ video/ activity monitor elicited unstructured discussions	Observation and field notes of co-researchers' activities	Ethnographic interviews	Activity monitor data collection	Researcher interviews with key adults co-researchers identify as facilitators of their activities	Collaborative preparation of mind maps/collages of favourite photographs	Collaborative preparation of a story of each of co-researchers free-choice time activities
Research Sub-Questions								
RQ1. What are the meanings that co-researchers invest in their chosen pursuits?	X	X	X	X			X	X
RQ2.What is the essence of the experience of co-researchers' chosen pursuits?		X	X	X			X	X
RQ3. How do co-researchers structure their chosen pursuits, what are the socio-cultural factors impacting on their lived experience of physical activity?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
KEY: Clear columns show initial portfolio of data collection methods; shaded columns show methods of generating data which developed with co-researchers during the research								

It was for the coresearchers to decide how and how long they engaged with the study.

Participation in the study was based on the individual commitment and interest of each participant through continuous reflexive practice which simultaneously enabled each participant to contribute when and how they wished.

This led to, individual pathways through the study which was compatible with the objects of research focused upon individual non-generalisable outcomes. Table 13 shows the variations in ways coresearchers engaged in data collection and analysis activities which demonstrated their agency as coresearchers to shape their participation. Research methods developed organically 'something that happened in the field, on the day' (Pahl and Pool, 2011). For instance, some coresearchers took all their own photos and videos whilst others delegated this task; some prepared their own stories whilst others critiqued stories I prepared from their chosen data for them.

Table 13 Coresearchers' different data collection and analysis methods

Coresearcher	Data collection activities (see section 8.3.2)		Data analysis activities (see section 8.3.3)			
	Collection of images (photographs and videos)	Shared activities with researcher to observe / join	Collage mind map of free-choice pursuits	Discussion and development of headings to describe free-choice pursuits	Preparation of the story of their free-choice pursuits to summarise and distill the experiences	Discussion of story to develop headings
Georgia	Created majority of own images	Limited	✓	✓	✓*	✓
Jay	Selected from images taken by Mum	✓	✓	✓	✓***	✓
Danny	Directed / selected from images taken by parents	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓
Harry	Directed / selected from images taken by parents	✓	✓	✓		
Reilly	Created majority of own images	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vixen Swift	Created majority of own images	✓	✓	✓	✓**	✓
Gareth	Created majority of own images	Limited	✓	✓	✓	✓
IA	Created majority of own images and directed images taken by Mum	Limited	✓	✓		
BG	Selected from images taken by Mum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
*Prepared own stories. ** Prepared a summary overview to supplement story developed for her by the researcher *** Provided detailed critical feedback						

Control of data

Coresearchers importantly had the power of veto in the selection of data which was analysed. The most vivid example of this was Jay's critique of the story I drafted for him (see the extract of Jay's critiqued transcript Appendix XII). The story was prepared directly from his own words describing his photographs and videos and from our discussions. However, he rejected large sections of the story as being no longer relevant or of interest. This alerted me to his quickly changing enthusiasms for activities. It also made me reflect about the degree to which Jay had actively selected his photographic and video data rather than delegate the process of gathering visual images to his Mother and passively comply.

Two of the coresearchers did not wish to go as far as distilling their data into a story of their free choice pursuits. They finished with the preparation of their collage mind maps grouped with key headings to describe their data. This was sufficient to complete the further inductive analysis of their data.

Directing the focus of the study

Shortly after enrolment, coresearchers naturally gravitated towards collecting data about both physically active and inactive pursuits in their free-choice times/ spaces. In that move coresearchers subtly redirected the gaze of the research placing a stronger emphasis upon what they did in their free choice space/time rather than upon the physical activities that they chose. This impacted research findings by highlighting:

- The value that coresearchers placed on both active and inactive pursuits including time to connect with family; time to just 'chill' and relax,
- That a larger range of pursuits competed for coresearchers' free-choice time
- Coresearchers tended not to differentiate between active and inactive pursuits in their free-choice time

In summary the impact of coresearchers collecting data about their non-physical activities, for instance about their crafting, computer gaming and socialising, located

the study in their day-to-day lives. This potentially provided greater authenticity to the study to their conceptualisation and lived experiences of physical activities.

Influencing the evolving research questions

At the start of the study I had anticipated collaboratively developing a single shared set of research questions which reflected the theoretical positioning of the study based upon the overall shared research aim. I had planned to facilitate the development of the research questions with coresearchers during data collection as coresearchers became familiar with the concept of research generally and the aims of this study in particular (see Section 4.4 Figure 3). However, the research questions developed differently as shown in the revised schematic of the research processes in Figure 24 Schematic to show research processes as actually undertaken.

Taking a lead from the coresearchers we intuitively focused upon an operationalised set of research questions guided by coresearchers data collection comprising:

What do coresearchers liked to do in their free-choice time?’

- What were the most important things?
- Why were these the most important things?
- What it was like to do the things they chose?

These questions then guided coresearchers’ ongoing data collection, the grouping of data under key headings (first phase of analysis) and the preparation of rich descriptions of physical activity in their free-choice pursuits.

The overarching question, about what coresearchers liked to do in their free-choice time, most engaged co-researchers. Coresearchers were interested in showing what they liked to do and, how and why they did them; primarily highlighting the sources of fun and enjoyment that underpinned their pursuits. Coresearchers were also able to prioritise which were the most important things they liked to do. Verbalising why their chosen pursuits were the most important and explaining what it was like to do those things was

harder for coresearchers. Even the use of phenomenologically styled interviews/discussions in which I reflected and responded to coresearchers' own statements about their activities to probe their lived experiences could evoke simple one word responses. Further probing about 'why' could stall conversation

I continued to develop the theoretically framed research questions in response to coresearchers' participation, to the end of data analysis (found at the end of Chapter 5: Findings). Upon reflection, I realised that the data coresearchers generated provided what was needed to answer theoretically framed questions. This had the effect of focusing data collection and analysis upon questions relevant to and guided by coresearchers whilst providing the data for further theoretical analysis. Figure 24 shows the research process as actually undertaken with the development of operationalised research questions during data collection resulting in coresearchers' descriptions of what they liked to do in their free-choice time whilst I took forward the theoretically framed research questions.

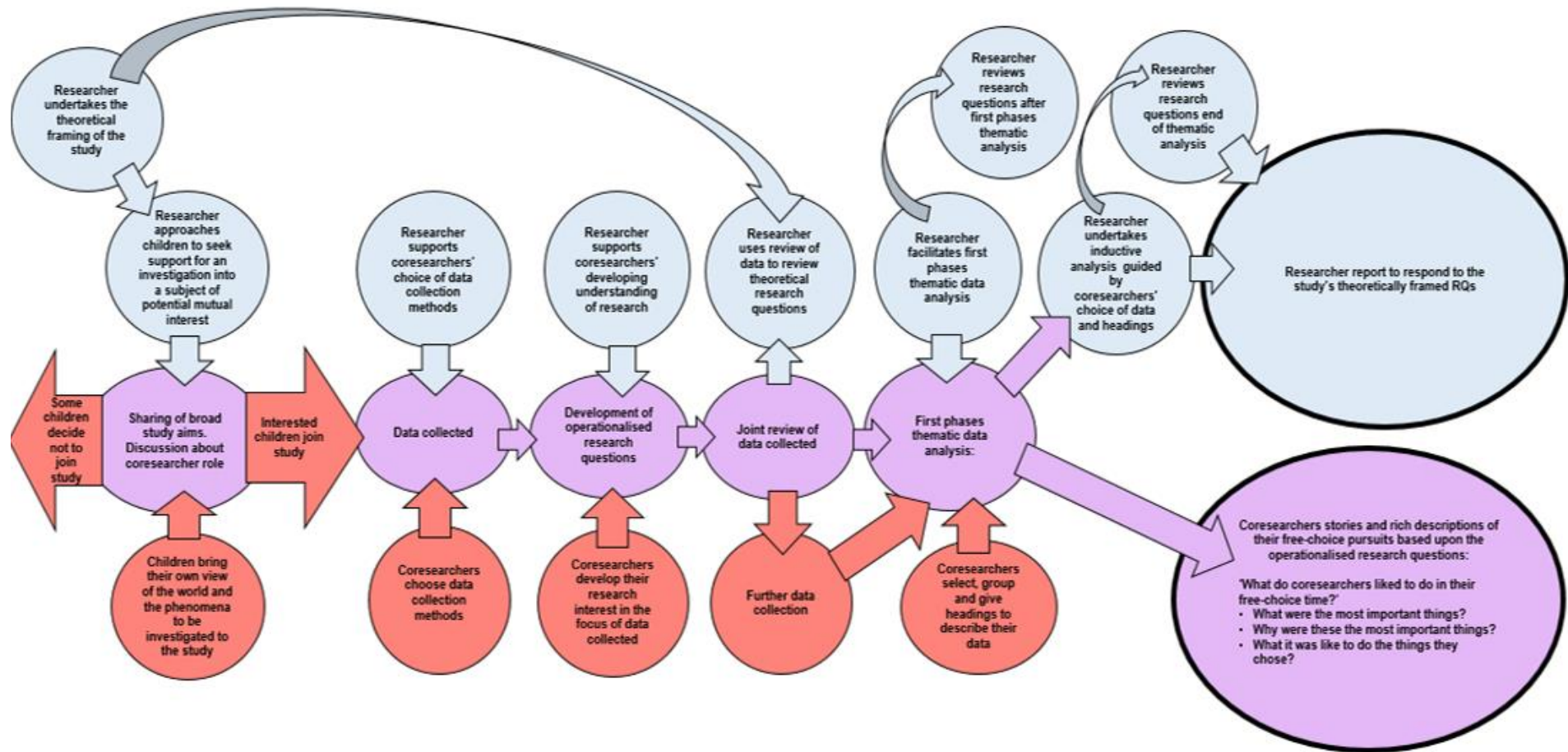


Figure 24 Schematic to show research processes as actually undertaken

Coresearcher guidance in the analysis of their data

The inclusion of coresearchers in the analysis of their own data was a key aspect of the AChiG participatory model. By enabling coresearchers to guide the data analysis process I hoped to increase the ownership that coresearchers had of their data to ensure that a) their stories of their free choice pursuits reflected the story they wanted to tell and b) guided further in depth inductive analysis of the data that was most important to them (Pahl and Pool, 2011).

Headings coresearchers used to describe their data whilst meaningful to the coresearchers were not intuitively understandable for me. Coresearchers talked to me about the headings they had chosen. Through discussion they made me more aware of their enthusiasms for particular pursuits, what they liked to do and why. However, reflecting back upon this experience, I was not equipped to listen in a way that I could hear what they were articulating. I proceeded with the planned simultaneous deductive and inductive coding of coresearchers' data. This meant that inductively analysed themes were generated from coresearcher's data to elucidate each of their headings. At this point I came to better understand the significance of coresearchers' headings, revealed to me through the inductively analysed themes (Figure 21). For instance, Danny's heading of 'Gurdwara' identified the importance to him of family and cultural values that were an integral part of his physical activity choices and experiences and his sense of identity in playing "good" football.

This experience was a powerful illustration of coresearchers guiding research to new insights beyond the experiences and knowledge I brought to the study as the adult researcher.

8.3.3 Coresearcher impact upon the theoretical framing of research findings

The study was committed to a participatory phenomenological research approach, focused upon the coresearchers' development of rich descriptions of their experiences and conceptualisations of their chosen physical activity. Coresearchers also provided a

significant body of data comprising intertwined socioecological and sociocultural factors associated with their physical activity choices, perceptions and experiences (see Chapter 5 Section 5.8.3). These factors shaped the context and parameters for their physical activity choices and experiences. Coresearchers' data guided my use of a socioecological theoretical framework to analyse the significance of these factors upon the coresearchers' lived experience of their chosen physical activity. This is provided for in the AChiG participatory model Figure 3 which shows coresearcher and researcher study outcomes. The development of the study in this way is also in keeping with studies which apply more than one theoretical approach (dual process models) which have potential to broaden understanding of children's lived experiences of physical activity (Rhodes, McEwan and Rebar, 2019).

8.3.4 Insights from the use of an AChiG participatory research model

Insights into coresearchers lived experiences of physical activity in their free-choice time were made visible by the focus of the AChiG model upon coresearchers' lived experience of their own physical activities; the home-based context of the study and the guidance coresearchers provided particularly in the selection and analysis of their data.

The study set out to create detailed descriptions about how coresearchers conceptualised and experienced physical activity in their free-choice time. Coresearchers guided the generation of authentic first-person descriptions captured in the photographs and video images they collected and selected for analysis. In discussion of their data they revealed how they socially constructed their conceptualisations of physical activity from their lived experiences providing rare insights into:

- The nature and importance of immediate family upon coresearchers' choices and experiences of physical activity; the influence of parents upon the way coresearchers conceptualised physical activity, particularly the knowledge, experience and attitudes parents brought to their children's physical activity

- The socioecological settings impacting families which in turn impacted coresearchers' conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity including time and space for physical activity

The AChiG model involved the researcher and coresearcher working together over an extended period (an average of 12 months). This provided insights into the complex, fluid and layered nature of coresearchers' physical activity interests. It allowed me to experience coresearchers' changing priorities over time and the competing calls upon coresearchers' free-choice time which for some was at a premium. In addition, coresearchers foregrounded a rarely discussed aspect of children's physical activity which was their need for time to relax and socialise, particularly to connect with close family.

Under coresearchers' guidance, data analysis shaped coresearchers' various physical activity experiences characterised as both active play and mastery of activities. A number of themes either emphasised or revealed new insights about the conceptualisation and experiences of physical activity. Coresearchers' data revealed the universal importance of fun and enjoyment from raised affective states in play activities and from a sense of achievement from mastery of skills and performance. However, data went further to highlight fun and enjoyment in physical activity from:

- The participation of family members, particularly parents, which enhanced physical activity experiences
- Humour, teasing and silliness particularly linked to family activities and shared experiences
- Movement sensations and embodied experiences of physical activity
- The opportunity to deploy imagination and creativity in fully embodied experiences simultaneously engaging mind and body.

Finally, the engagement of family members particularly Mothers in data generation activities revealed the discussions and debates that occurred between coresearchers and their parents. This provided insights into the ways coresearchers were developing their attitudes and perceptions including their perceptions of physical activity.

In summary the AChiG model empowered and enabled coresearchers through the combined phenomenological/participatory approach and the practical conduct of the research to reveal different insights associated with the home-based context of the study. Coresearchers were able to focus the study upon questions that were most significant to them revealing the importance of the research context i.e. coresearchers' home/family-based free-choice time when physical activity competed with a range of other pursuits and priorities including precious time with close family members. In selecting their research methods coresearchers revealed their preferences for data generation in socially interactive ways and in association with parents.

8.3.5 The framing of an AChiG participatory model of research

The AChiG participatory approach was inspired by Mason and Urquhart's (2001) framework of models of children's participatory approaches based upon a continuum of increasing child empowerment (see Section 3.5.2). The framework of models of participatory research approaches was useful to me to establish how the claim to a participatory approach using the AChiG model was being made (Aldridge, 2017).

In Figure 25 I show how I have conceptualised the AChiG model of children's participatory research between Mason and Urquhart's (2001) Child's Rights and Children's Movement models in an adaption of their framework schematic. The AChiG model has strong synergies with both adjacent models whilst making a distinct contribution to the framework of models.

	Models of participatory research			
Key elements	Adult	Children's Rights	Child-guided (AChiG)	Children's Movement
Initiation participation strategy	Agency / external statutory agency	Agency / external statutory agency	Children invited by external agency and free to participate as they wish	Children (e.g. children's labour movements)
Ideological framework	Positivist / market forces, consumer involvement	Phenomenological / constructivist	Autophenomenological / phenomenological social constructivist	Minority rights, groups struggle
Children viewed as	Passive, incompetent, developmentally incomplete 'becomings'	Actors, competent, 'beings', oppressed	Actors, competent 'beings' with unique insights into the personal experiences being studied	Actors, competent, human beings
Locus of power	Adults through governance and 'best interests', asymmetrical	Questions the generational order, symmetrical	Power sharing collaboration in which adults support children's empowerment	Children empowered
Needs identification	Normative from psychological literature	Individualised, from listening to children	Individualised from listening to children and asserted in way children guide research	Asserted both as a group and individually
Method of decision making	Adults structure procedures	Negotiation between stakeholders	Shared between stakeholders and guided by children as experts	Children dominated
Knowledge	Adult authority	Opportunity for children to shape and contribute	Children experts about own lives, authentic source of knowledge and understanding of lived experiences being studied	Children experts on own lives, recognises and challenges adults' power over children
Professionals	Superiority of expertise used for empowering	Facilitate through alliances	Facilitate and enable children to guide inquiry with a reflexive attitude to research processes	Provide resources
Children's voices	Filtered	Reflexivity by adults and children facilitates children's voices being heard	Reflexivity by adults empowers children to guide research and have voices heard	Challenge and unsettle adults

Increasing children's empowerment over the research process



Adapted from Mason and Urquhart's (2001) Models of children's participation, to show the potential positioning of a Child-guided agentic participatory research model

Figure 25 Schematic to show the positioning of the AChiG model in an adaption of Mason's and Urquhart's Models of Children's Participation

8.4 Study challenges, limitations and original contribution to knowledge

8.4.1 Challenges

As with any research approach there were challenges associated with the AChiG participatory research model. Key challenges comprised the time commitment required by collaborative working; maintaining the independence of researcher-coresearcher relationships, the impact of parents as gatekeepers and finally the complexity of data analysis.

Time consuming nature of establishing and maintaining collaborative working

The encouragement of 'dialogue, joint analysis and learning processes were complex and time-consuming' (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998, p. 342). It was important to take a lead from each coresearcher in terms of the scheduling of data collection and research meetings to progress research processes. As has been highlighted coresearchers led very busy lives and the scheduling of additional study meetings encroached upon their free time which I needed to respect, and the collection and analysis of data took longer than anticipated.

Researcher-coresearcher and gatekeeper relationships

The development of my working relationship with coresearchers was significantly accelerated by parents, primarily Mothers through whom initial contact was made. Given the potentially intrusive nature of undertaking research with children in their private home space and time this was the most efficient method of meeting and enrolling coresearchers. Initiating trusted research relationships was therefore assisted by coresearchers seeing the trust parents had in me. Maintenance of my researcher-coresearcher relationships were also mediated by coresearchers' parents. Whilst this was useful it also positioned parents as gatekeepers to the coresearchers in a potentially influential role.

Some parents admitted that they had to hold themselves back from answering for their children in their enthusiasm to assist with the research. Some became very involved in supporting data collection. For instance, Danny recalls his Father spontaneously assisting with data collection when he started to record a video interview with him about Danny's Saturday morning TV time whilst he was watching WWE wrestling (180405 INT M DAN). Danny subsequently included the interview in his story. Ultimately however it was the coresearchers who selected the visual images and created headings to describe their summary of free-choice activities. Coresearchers prepared and/or critiqued and approved their stories of their physical activity in their free-choice pursuits. Coresearchers' independence of thinking was illustrated very strongly in Jay's rejection of so much of the draft story that I prepared for him and the photographs the story was built upon.

8.4.2 Study limitations

I chose to work with children aged 7 to 11 years old who were in Key stage 2 of schooling in England as studies suggested that these middle childhood years were formative in children's development of sustained physical activity habits. There were noticeable differences in maturity and life skills between the youngest and the eldest coresearchers, particularly as the eldest started to prepare to transition to secondary school. For instance, at the upper end of the age group, parents were allowing their children a little more freedom to roam in their free-play activities. Agency over the choices coresearchers made therefore differed. The coresearchers' reporting of their experiences remains authentic, and some coresearchers spoke about the restrictions that they had to roam unsupervised. It was not always possible to differentiate between coresearchers' free choice and that activity they chose within the circumstances given.

The research took place in the coresearchers' home and family time/space and I was a guest in that time/space. Whilst I took time to try to normalise my presence, the study had the impact of overlaying a research gaze upon coresearchers' activities which could have altered their spontaneous experience of the activity. The act of reflecting upon their activities, what they did, why and how they felt about the experience could contribute to

the ongoing construction of their understanding of their lived experiences of physical activity.

The study was guided by the coresearchers' priorities for data collection. They chose what they wanted to present, and some would argue that this was an interpretation of their own lived experiences rather than a transparent unmediated representation of their experience. I acknowledge that this is likely in part to be the case but believe that the child-guided participatory approach still has the potential to reveal insights about coresearchers lived experiences perhaps as well as aspirations they choose to portray.

The study was in part inspired by my professional experience of physical activity. I was concerned that much of existing research into children's physical activity was underpinned by policy discourses about children's physical activity for health and wellbeing, personal, social and emotional development. This focus had not improved low levels of physical activity in England. By researching with 7 to 11 years old coresearchers I hoped to identify new insights into how children themselves conceptualised their physical activity and potentially reveal different child-guided discourses about their physical activity which may inform policy and practice. Individual studies such as this cannot empower children to make a significant contribution to policy discourses (Thomas, 2007). However, this study does add to a body of evidence which might build to provide compelling arguments in the future about alternative views of children's physical activity which are driven by family participation; imagination and creativity and the enjoyment of movement itself.

Finally, researcher reflexivity is an important aspect of the AChiG participatory model. The study has shown how key aspects of planned reflexivity embedded in the research approach contributed to coresearcher empowerment and agency. The breadth of reflexive thinking demonstrated by the greater number of reflexive memos than anticipated in both early planning and later analysis stages of the study highlighted potential further aspects. There has not however been the space to investigate this aspect of the study within the limitations of the reporting of the study. Neither has the study addressed the potential for

coresearchers to be included in reflexive practices and processes which provides potential for development of the AChiG model.

Potential future research to inform public policy and provision for children's physical activity might include:

- Potential power of family based physical activity programming
- Potential to include imagination and creativity – role of play and play characteristics (i.e. self-determined, unstructured, stimulated by children's culture interests e.g. video games), supported by in-class activity bursts;
- Potential to manage risk to offer physical activity as creative challenges
- Role of media/social media in encouraging children to have fun moving
- Embodied movement opportunities – need to give expression to movement and movement sensations – the power of being silly to motivate activity
- Provision of more casual drop in and out of activities to meet the dynamic nature of coresearchers' changing conceptualisations of physical activity interests.

Potential future research to develop reflexive approaches to children's participatory research might include:

- The impact on adult researchers of a structured reflexive approach to research
- What a planned reflexive approach to research reveals at different stages of the research process
- Investigating the potential benefits of inclusion of child participants/ coresearchers in reflexive processes of participatory research.

8.5 Contributions to original knowledge

The study provided authentic first-hand descriptions of coresearchers experiences of physical activity as part of their free-choice pursuits and in doing so it has contributed to small but growing bodies of research into children's physical activity comprising:

- **Research which investigates middle childhood children's experiences of physical activity.** The study has in addition, contributed to the least researched home/family spaces and times children have for physical activity. This is when children have greatest free-choice and agency away from the obligations of structured school life
- **Participatory research into children's physical activity.** The study demonstrated the capability of 7 to 11 years olds to contribute to research as coresearchers empowered to help guide decision making and shape research in ways that make studies most relevant to them. Credibility is strengthened by the participation and guiding role that coresearchers can command throughout research
- **Existential phenomenological studies which focus upon broad embodied views of coresearchers' experiences of physical activity.** Coresearchers conceptualised their free-choice activities as opportunities to socialise and psychosocially connect with others; to engage in imaginative and creative experiences. These experiences were woven through their bodily movement sensations and the physicality of engaging in activity. Engaging in this broad embodied view of physical activity the study contributes to the potential development of a discourse of children's physical activity which could augment current dominant policy discourses which underpin much research in this area.

The study has contributed potential alternative conceptualisations of physical activity from the point of view of a group of 7 to 11 years old coresearchers'. Offering new conceptualisations of physical activity could assist in disengaging from existing dualistic policy discourses of sport and physical activity in England. On one hand sport and physical activity is conceptualised for health and wellbeing on the other for performance associated with mastery and competing in structured sports (Collins *et al.*, 2012). An alternative discourse based on children's free-choice lived experiences of physical activity may provide insights for policy makers and practitioners which could assist in dealing with the challenge of childhood inactivity.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge which finds that fun and enjoyment underpins children's motivations for being active, particularly a small but growing body of studies which highlight the embodied nature of fun and enjoyment in which children simultaneously experience physical activity as a sensuous, social and physical experience.

8.6 Ethical considerations

Positioning myself as a virtuous researcher (Iphofen, 2017) with an emphasis upon continuous reflexivity and a transparent research methodology, provided me with a strong framework for the ethical conduct of the research. That framework manifested itself in a number of ways both in the design and in the conduct of the research. I will give examples here to illustrate the strength of the approach before reflecting on future improvements.

The first ethical issue was linked to the slight refocusing of the study by coresearchers' own actions to focus on data collection of all their free-choice pursuits. In approaching the study, I wanted to avoid implicit value judgements to suggest that active pursuits were of higher value than inactive pursuits (see Chapter 3: Methodology, Ethics). When I introduced the study, I instinctively foregrounded the research aim as research into what children liked to do in their free-choice time following this up with my interest in their chosen physical activities and why. Ethically I could not insist on data collection focusing upon physically active pursuits firstly because I had assured coresearchers of their power to guide the research and secondly there was a danger that I would be seen to value physically active pursuits more highly than others. This decision also contributed to positive research outcomes as outlined in Section 8.2

At an operational level on rare occasions my presence in activity settings was potentially uncomfortable for coresearchers. Coresearchers could change their minds about wanting me present even after an invitation had been issued. It was possible that coresearchers' parents through whom I worked as gatekeepers might have made those invitations or pressured coresearchers. A reflexive approach alerted me to potential concerns and to

take appropriate action for instance I could join activity leaders and keep a distance from the coresearchers. I did not meet situations where it was necessary to leave. Reflexive memos enabled me to record concerns to inform my observations and thinking. I took a lead from coresearchers with respect to the involvement in data generating and data analysis discussions. The development of research relationships over a relatively long period of time (12-18 months) with both coresearchers and their parents helped to manage situations where parents proffered their views. I was able as the research progressed to emphasise the importance of the coresearchers' opinions and thinking and I believe this view was honoured. However, I remained aware of the potential impact of parents upon children's responses and also my own position as an adult researcher trusted by their parents.

Only one potentially sensitive issue arose for discussion with coresearchers which was about two of the coresearchers deciding to withdraw from Academy Football places. I approached coresearchers in two different ways a). ignoring and waiting for the coresearcher to open a way into a conversation about their decision b). direct approach foregrounding my understanding that this might be something that the coresearcher didn't feel they wanted to talk about and being ready to move on quickly. Both approaches worked and provided very useful insights about the impact of unsympathetic coaching environments.

This leads me to highlight priorities for future developments in the ethical conduct of the AChiG model. These are primarily concerned with the role and position of coresearchers within the research. Coresearchers were willing and generous with the time that they gave to the study which stretched over a year. Nonetheless, I was concerned by the call on the good will of the coresearchers and their families. Whilst I had provided small gifts during the study as marks of appreciation, unlike school-based research this was taking coresearchers' precious free time and there were no real benefits to them in participating. As a result, in future developments of the model, I would consider payment for time coresearchers had to take away from their usual activities. This would both recompense

coresearchers for the use of their free time and recognise the value of their time in a way that is commensurate with the coresearcher role (Smith, Monaghan and Broad, 2002).

8.7 Recommendations for further research

The contributions of this study to original knowledge frame recommendations for further studies. I would recommend that further participatory research be undertaken with middle childhood children to help build a compelling body of child-centred understandings of their lived experiences of physical activity. Simultaneously, I would recommend further studies are undertaken using the AChiG approach to assess the model's potential in providing further insights into children's lived experiences.

8.7.1 Research into middle childhood physical activity

Based on the findings of this study further research should be undertaken to better understand:

- The ways middle childhood children conceptualise physical activities in their free choice time with particular focus upon investigating the continuum of conceptualisations between active play and mastery of activities proposed here (see Section 6.4.3)
- The impact of parents participating with their children upon children's conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity
- The impact of parental cultural capital with respect to physical activity on children's, conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity
- The role of imagination and creativity in children's conceptualisations and experiences of physical activity
- The nature of children's fun and enjoyment found in physical activity with close family, particularly parents and found in the exercise of imagination and creativity

8.7.2 Research to develop the AChiG model

This study has demonstrated that 7 to 11 years old coresearchers are capable of guiding research into their own lived experiences in ways that can provide insights which an adult researcher would not have achieved. Reflecting upon the AChiG model I would continue to develop it in the following ways

Enabling children to guide the research gaze

The child-guided model can resolve concerns about imposing adult researcher / theoretically devised research questions on child participants on the one hand and turning children into mini-adults with adult ways of thinking about research on the other. The introduction of a topic of study that is of interest and relevant to children with active reflexive approach and acute awareness; active listening and observation can enable/facilitate coresearchers to guide the research gaze / conversation.

Having experienced the capacity for coresearchers to engage in this way, I would be more explicit in discussing the research process with coresearchers as their understanding and engagement in the study deepened. This might include scheduled research management meetings to review and plan progress which would provide an explicit opportunity for coresearchers to make suggestions to shape research in progress.

8.7.3 Reflecting with coresearchers on their role as coresearchers

Coresearchers demonstrated their capability and interest in sustained commitment to the research study. They developed understanding of their role as the research progressed. However, there would be value in explicitly revisiting and discussing the coresearchers' roles with them towards the mid-way point of data collection when they had more understanding of the full potential of their role. This would serve a number of purposes. It would assist in developing a deeper and joint understanding of the research aims and research questions and potentially explore coresearchers' own interests in the investigation. It would help to reinforce joint understanding and importance of the researcher-coresearcher role and foreground the coresearcher's agency in making

suggestions about the conduct of the research. An opportunity would be given to discuss coresearchers' aspirations from the experience of conducting the research if any. From this it may be possible to reward coresearchers with research outcomes they would value.

8.8 Final thoughts

In conclusion, in Section 8.3 I reflected on the AChiG research methodology to see if the model might provide different insights into coresearchers' lived experiences of their chosen physical activity. The child-guided participatory approach enabled coresearchers to guide and refocus the study upon physical activity within the broad range of their free-choice pursuits. That refocusing highlighted a wide range of interests competing for my coresearchers' sometimes limited time. Coresearchers' guidance, particularly in data analysis, focused findings upon underlying experiences of physical activity and sources of fun and enjoyment which extended current research studies. This study has highlighted coresearchers' fun and enjoyment in exercising their creativity and imagination and bonding with parents in formative ways sharing family time and recreational experiences. This provides opportunities for innovative ways of engaging children in physical active and re-framing physical activity as a creative and family experience.

Bringing together a participatory approach, which recognised children as social actors in constructing their own lives, and a phenomenological study of their own lived experiences provided a strong foundation upon which participatory research methods could flourish. The AChiG model has made a start along the road to research guided by children which succeeded in revealing new insights into children's lived experiences of physical activity. Unless we are open to being guided by children in researching their experiences of physical activity, how will adult researchers and practitioners come to understand for instance the motivations and imaginative sources of enjoyment that people like Jay seek from his physical activity:

“because I like t', climb trees and get coconuts down and everything”

(Jay aged 7 years).

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10 Appendices

Appendix I. **Pilot Study I: Background information**

I.a. **Pilot Study 1: Key points of ethical approval.**

Ethical considerations were detailed in a successful application to the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee. The application set out a). the overall approach to the study as a piece of ethically planned and constructed research and b). measures for safeguarding the interests of child research participants. Each of the considerations are summarised here:

- Contextualisation of the study with the general best interest of children in mind i.e. to help address a gap in child-centred research with middle childhood children to provide a forum for a group of children to have their views heard about an aspect of their lives i.e. physical activity which was being widely debated by adults
- Methodology which respected the impact of research methods on participants' personal time and space which included:
 - The method of identifying an appropriate participant sample which was a non-representative convenience sample of children from within a typical English holiday playscheme to provide non-generalisable findings about what this group of children said about physical activity
 - The enrolment of participants including the eliciting of informed consent from participants as well as their parents/carers which was free of coercion and provisions which included:
 - Appropriate application of comprehensive age-appropriate information sheets and consent forms for both children and adults which gave children and adults space and time to consider key facts including ways in which children could choose to participate or not and/or change their minds about participation without concern (See Appendix I.b and I.c)
 - Location and scheduling of data collection in the natural setting of children's holiday play scheme in such a way that it would not inhibit

children's natural enjoyment of their activities; and which were detailed to demonstrate appropriate permissions had been obtained for the methods identified e.g. the use of photography and videoing by participants; the duration of data collection and processing

- Data collection methods which were accessible to participants comprising the use of iPads to take images and video sequences of activities they wished to profile; recorded discussions with the researcher about their selected images. Researcher participant observation of participants' activities and the capturing of digital images and video sequences with participants' permissions.
- The declaration of the use of The British Educational Research Association ethics and legal guidelines
- Data Protection and Data Security measures which included:
 - Registration of the study with the Open University's Data Protection Coordinator declaring the use and recording of participants' personal data; the use of data for research purposes; identification of data being provided by 7-9 years old children and the nature of data comprising a range of images of children in their holiday activities; participants' own images; voice recordings and transcripts of interviews with participants and observation field notes.
 - Measures for use of participants' data covering:
 - The use only of data for which permission had been given by both participants and their carers
 - Anonymising data for instance with the use of pseudonyms chosen by participants and removing the potential for individuals to be recognised in images e.g. by redacting images
 - The restriction of the use of appropriately anonymised participant data for the writing up of the study for

examination purposes and for the dissemination of the results of the study initially on the host holiday playscheme company website and thereafter as part of academic presentations of the study.

- Collection of minimal personal data about participants stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) in a secure storage system provided by the Open University for this purpose. The anonymising of data and destruction of transcribed electronic data
 - Password protection of electronically stored recorded data stored in a dedicated secure filing area provided by the Open University for this purpose.
 - A declaration that all recordings would be destroyed on completion of the researcher's Doctoral studies for which the research provided a pilot study.
- Recompense to participants was considered but none made; rather a commitment to ensure that research activities should not inhibit the participants' enjoyment of their holiday playscheme
 - A commitment was made that full consideration had been given to the potential for deception of participants or those caring for them in relation to the purpose or any other potential impact of the research
 - Full consideration of the potential risk of harm to participants. The researcher fully understood safeguarding issues and had a current DBS check. Appropriate measures were put into place via the host holiday activity management company to deal with any matter that needed to be referred under the safeguarding of children agenda
 - General ethical considerations included:
 - Consideration of the impact of asymmetric power relationships between adult researcher and child participants in research including: sharing personal information about children's views on physical activity; the impact

of research on children's personal time and space; ensuring participants are well-informed; that the study was focused upon benefiting participants/children generally or at least not dis-benefitting them; ensuring that research methods were accessible and enjoyable

- Measures were outlined for thanking participants for their contributions, giving feedback and celebrating participants' work and providing participants with an opportunity to share the views they expressed.

Provision was made with the holiday playscheme host company website to share participants' artwork, and key findings of the study where permission was given and data appropriately anonymised.

I.b. Pilot Study 1: Carer information letter and consent form



By hand/email

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

Finding out what children aged 5-11 years old say about being physically active.

I am looking forward to meeting your child at the activity event during half term. I am hoping to carry out research with some of the children participating in the event. The purpose of this letter is to explain what the research is about and to invite your child to participate.

The research is a pilot study for my PhD investigation into children and physical activity. My general interest is about the role of physical activity in well-being in early childhood. The aim of the study is to find out what physical activity means to children around 5 to 11 years old by listening to what they say and observing how they participate in activities. There is rising recognition that even young children have highly valid first hand understanding of the world and engaging them in research about matters that involve them can be very rewarding.

The research will be woven into the activity event and should not inhibit the children's natural enjoyment of the day. Indeed we hope that it will add another layer of fun. For instance, as part of the event each child will be invited to take turns at being their group 'journalist' to take pictures of the activities they enjoy. Children will be recorded via radio microphones worn by their group Sports Leader and videoed or observed taking part in the various activities during the event.

All information collected as part of this study will be anonymised and confidential and kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act. You can request to have any data specifically related to your child destroyed. The data will be stored securely in electronic form and will not be forwarded to any third parties. The study will be carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association. With your permission, anonymised data comprising quotes from children, video extracts and photographs may be used in interim reports, presentations and the final thesis which will be available to you via the research website when complete. In addition to show my appreciation, highlights of the children's activities will be posted shortly after the event on SSG's website as a celebration of the event.

I would be pleased if you would consider the opportunity to take part in this research with your child. I have attached an information sheet for children which I hope will assist you both to decide if he/she would like to take part or not. Please assist your child in completing their consent form, complete the parental consent form and bring both to the first day of the activity week. If your child decided to take part but changes their mind for any reason they are free to withdraw at any time without the need for explanation or any adverse consequences. They would simply have to let their group Sports Leader know and they could take part in all the activities as usual but in a group, which was not being videoed, recorded or observed.

If you would like any further details please contact me using the contact information below or alternatively you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Grace Clifton at the Faculty of Education and Language Studies, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or via telephone on 01908 xxxxx.

Thank you for your interest in reading this information. I hope you and your child will be interested in taking part in the research and look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest regards

Linda Plowright

Research Student

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**Faculty of Languages, Education and Languages Studies (FELS)/Centre for
Research in Education and Education Technology (CREET)**

Consent Form for Research Involving Children

'What 5-11 years old children say about being physically active'

As a parent/guardian you are deciding whether to have your child participate in this study about "What children aged 5-11 years say about being physically active". Your signature indicates that you have read the letter providing information about this research and have decided to allow your child to participate should they wish to do so. A separate combined information leaflet and consent form has been provided for your child to read and sign indicating if they wish to take part or not. Positive responses from both you and your child will be needed before your child is involved in the research.

You will receive a copy of the consent documents.

Signature of Parent
or Legally Authorised Representative

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Please use the envelope provided and hand this form to a member of the SSG staff at morning registration of the playscheme by Thursday 28th May 2015.

I.c. Pilot Study 1: Participant information and consent form

What do you like and not like about being active?

Hello - Can you help me?

I am going to be at your playscheme next week. I hope that you and your friends will help me to find out what children like you enjoy about being active.

Linda

(I'm a researcher and my job is to find things out)



To collect information, I would like to video you and the other children taking part in the sports and activities at the playscheme. When I have the video and recordings, I will be able to look at what you were enjoying and listen to what you were saying about the activities. This might help adults to plan activities that you will enjoy.

You don't have to be part of the video or recording. It is not a problem if you don't want to take part. You can also change your mind if you decide you don't want to continue once the activities have started. All you must do is to tell an adult and you can carry on with the activities and with your friends in a group that isn't being recorded.

None of the videos or recordings will be used in a way that you can be identified, and they will be thrown away as soon as I have finished listening to what you have said and watching everyone taking part in the playscheme.

So that I know if you would like to take part in the research or **not** please answer the questions below by circling your answer to each question. Ask an adult if you need help.

Do you have any questions about the research?

YES NO

Would you be happy to be part of the video of the event?

YES NO

Would you be happy to have what you say while you are playing recorded?

YES NO

Now write your name here:

Thank you for reading this sheet and thinking about helping with my research

Linda

Appendix II. **Pilot Study 2: Background Information**

II.a. **Pilot Study 2: Key points of ethical approval**

Ethical issues associated with the second pilot study were essentially identical to the first pilot. Small differences arose because of the different setting of the study. The second pilot study planned to investigate children's school playtime activity choices, initially focused upon children less engaged in organised school sports. The following points build upon the detailed description of ethical considerations for the first pilot study (contained in Appendix I.a) shaped by the OU HREC application for ethical approval of the study. The application set out a). the overall approach to the study as a piece of ethically planned and constructed research and b). measures for safeguarding the interests of child research participants. Key ethical issues introduced by the different research setting are associated with the methodology and methods which respected the impact of research on participants' personal time and space and are summarised here.

- **The method of identifying an appropriate participant sample and enrolment of participants:**

The setting of the research with a class of children differed from the first pilot study because children were part of a close-knit social group. This presented different challenges in relation to potential feelings of embarrassment or pressures from peers for instance to be a part of the study. Measures different to the first pilot study were used to seek children and their carers' informed consent. The school contacted the class children's carers to gain initial consent for me to approach their children using information letters and consent forms provided (see Appendix II.b). After meeting the class to explain that I was coming to the school to ask for the class's help and explaining the research, I engaged the class teacher's assistance. The class teacher gave the children the age-appropriate information and consent forms I had prepared and supported children in their decision to take part or not. This measure did not take away the potential impact of peer pressure, nor the potential for children assuming that they should take part to please the adults involved i.e. parents, the class teacher as well as the researcher. However, the class teacher was a trusted adult who knew the children and could help in identifying any who appeared uncomfortable about participating and enable them to decide not to take part. This also established a trusted adult to whom participants could go if they had ongoing questions or concerns about the study for instance, if they wished to withdraw. Two children opted not to take part in the study at this stage. One subsequently changed their mind and joined in collecting images of what they liked to do in their play times.

- **Selection of focus children for observation.**

The study was initially particularly interested in working with children who were not highly committed to structured sports participation in order to assist in filling a gap in existing research. As in the first pilot study, care was taken to avoid inferred value judgements about children who might be considered less active. Letters introducing the research and seeking consent from carers to approach children were prepared contextualising the research interest to balance studies which were interested in those highly engaged in structured sports (see Appendix II.b.). Age-appropriate information and consent forms for children explained the research in a way that did not draw attention to children's activity levels (see Appendix II.c). The class teacher recommended children for selection as part of the focus group for observation based on their level of membership of school sport clubs and school sport teams. This together with children's own self-selection for participation in the study resulted in a mix of focus group children some of whom were participants in organised school sports and some who were not.

- **Data collection methods – observation**

The potential impact of observation in a school playground setting was different to that in the smaller voluntarily attended holiday playscheme. Whereas the researcher could adopt the role of participant-observer merging into the activity environment as an additional holiday playscheme leader, this was not appropriate to the school playground. However, the researcher could adopt an observer role appearing to join other adults as an additional playground supervisor. Note taking whilst observing needed to be unobtrusive so that children did not feel they were being scrutinised. This was in part achieved by preparing proforma to assist in giving contemporary records which could then be used as aide memoire shortly after the observation period to write up notes.

II.b. Pilot Study 2: Participant information and consent form

What do you like to do in school playtimes?

Hello - Can you help me?

My name is Linda.

I am a researcher and my job is to do projects to find things out.

I am going to be at your school soon. I would like you to help me with my project. I want to find out what you and your friends like to do in your playtimes and to tell adults what you say.



Here are three ways I would like you to help me. You don't have to take part in the research. You can also change your mind. All you have to do is tell your teacher or another adult. All the information you give me will be kept private. When I report what your class say about playtimes, I will not use anyone's proper names so what you say will be anonymous.

Tell me if you would like to take part by putting a circle like this **O** around your answer.

1. I would like you to take photographs of what you like to do in play times
Would you like to take photographs about what you enjoy doing in playtime? YES NO
2. I would like to talk to you about the photographs and record what you say so that I do not forget anything important.
Are you happy to talk to me and for me to record our talk? YES NO
3. I would also like watch and record what you and your friends do at playtime.
Are you happy for me to watch and record what you do? YES NO

Would you like to take part in the research? YES NO

Don't forget to write your name. Ask an adult if you need help.

Write your name here:

Thank you, Linda

II.c. Pilot Study 2: Parent information letter sent by school

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

Finding out what children choose to do in their school play times.

I am hoping to carry out a pilot study with your child(ren)'s class at xxxxxxxxx School for my PhD. The purpose of this letter is to explain what the research is about and to invite your child to participate.

My general interest is in the role of physical activity for well-being in early childhood. My belief is that this is not all about children being committed and competitive sportspeople. There is already quite a lot of research with children training and competing in a range of different sports and I would like to address a gap in research with those who are not already competing.

The aim of the study is to find out what 7-8 year old children choose to do in their recreation time. The research will be woven into their school play times over the course of up to two weeks in February/ March. It should not inhibit the children's natural enjoyment. Indeed, I hope that it will add another layer of fun. For instance, as part of the project each child will be invited to take pictures of the things, they like to do at play time. I will loan them iPads for this task. I will ask children if I can watch and record the things they do and audio record discussions with them so that I can use their own words to describe what is important to them.

I would also like to spend a little more time with three or four children from the class – ideally not engaged in competitive sport - to gather more in depth information. This will primarily comprise 15 minute rather than 5 minute discussions of their photographs.

All information collected as part of this study will be anonymised, remain confidential and kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act. You can request to have any data specifically related to your child(ren) destroyed. The data will be stored securely in electronic form and will not be forwarded to any third parties. The study will be carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association. With your permission, anonymised data comprising quotes from children and photographs may be used in interim reports, presentations and my final thesis which will be available to you via the research website when complete. In addition to show my appreciation, I am planning for the children to share their photographs and comments with their class teacher and Head Teacher so that they might receive feedback on their ideas about their play times.

I would be pleased if you would permit your child to take part in the research. I have attached information sheets and consent forms for you and your child(ren) which I hope will assist you. Please return both to school by 11th February if possible. If your child decided to take part but changes their mind for any reason, they are free to withdraw at any time without the need for explanation or any adverse consequences. They would simply have to let their teacher know.

If you would like any further details please contact me using the contact information below or alternatively you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Grace Clifton at the address below or via telephone on 01908 858864.

Thank you for your time and interest in reading this information

Kindest regards

Research Student

Faculty of Education and Language Studies, Stuart Hall, The Open University, Milton
Keynes, MK7 6AA Mobile: xxxxxxxxxx Office: 01908 65xxx, linda.plowright@open.ac.uk

Consent Form for Research Involving Children: Parent / Guardian

Faculty of Languages, Education and Languages Studies (FELS)/Centre for
Research in Education and Education Technology (CREET)

“What children choose to do in their school play times”

As a parent/guardian you are deciding whether to have your child participate in this study about “What 7-8-year olds choose to do in their school play time”. Your signature indicates that you have read the letter providing information about this research and have decided to allow your child to participate should they wish to do so. A separate combined information leaflet and consent form has been provided for your child to read and sign indicating if they wish to take part or not. Positive responses from both you and your child will be needed before your child is involved in the research.

In addition, I would like to carry out more in-depth discussions and observation with three or four children, particularly those not currently highly engaged in multiple sport training and competition, as explained in my covering letter. **Please indicate if you are willing or not for your child to participate in the research study (a) at a general level and/or (b) in giving more in depth information by amending the statements below and signing the form.**

You will receive a copy of the consent documents.

Name of child / children:

(a) I give/ do not give my permission for my child(ren) to participate in this research study. (Please delete as appropriate)

(b) I give/ do not give my permission for my child(ren) to be selected to participate in the collection of more in depth information about their playtime recreation choices. (Please delete as appropriate)

Signature of Parent

Date

or Legally Authorised Representative

Signature of Investigator

Date

Please use the envelope provided and hand this form to your child's/children's class teacher at the start of morning school period on Thursday February 11th, 2016

Appendix III. “Me and Physical Activity”

My older brother was an early influence on my middle childhood pursuits. A rural upbringing enabled me from no more than 7 years old to accompany him and his friends tramping across the fields or climbing apple trees in our orchard. Our two working parents had been very active sports participants and were ever supportive in encouraging our pursuits. However, they rarely engaged in any form of physical activity further than managing a large garden and orchard. I recall celebrating the fact that I had the most uninformed yet enthusiastic parents when witnessing the tears of other kids pressurised by parents who were also their swimming coaches.

At primary school I developed a long commitment to swimming and ballet. Swimming took a tenacious spirit. As a tiny child, I had little muscle to put into getting very fast. However, in the summer, each weekday, I cycled 2 miles to the town's outdoor unheated swimming pool for 7am training before cycling home for breakfast and then school. Saturdays were reserved for galas which I remember as cold, grey, rainy afternoons, parents shouting support from umbrellas and excited teammates all around. I felt sick and was beaten at the moment I took to the starting block; nervous tension seizing up every muscle. Always last in. Ballet was different. Ballet started at 5 years old like many children as a fun hobby and turned into a passion for 12 years. I have never found a pursuit with the uplifting combination of rigour, endeavour and expression that ballet demanded. After a 90 minute seniors class, leg muscles would be in spasm and I was often bodily exhausted. However, the introductory piano chords for the closing complex salutation would always trigger a surge of emotion that ran like a tidal wave through the body.

At secondary school I participated enthusiastically in team sport but without my emotional connection with dancing. The camaraderie of team sports carried me through competition, but athletics and individual sports returned me to dread and avoidance. In summary as an adolescent and young adult I was an enthusiastic ‘Jack-of-all-activities’, excelling in none.

This was sufficient to carry a love of having physical activity in my day-to-day life into adulthood and into my choice of career in community sport and physical activity after training as a specialist PE teacher. I was driven by the belief that for everyone there is a form of physical activity that is enriching and life enhancing for both body and soul. I believed that what I had experienced was accessible to everyone somehow.

However, I often found myself acutely frustrated and at odds with much of the policy and practice of physical activity participation provision in England. A focus upon structured forms of traditional sport and competition appeared to dominate discussion and limit the introduction of the full range of physical activity which can become part of people's day-to-day life. My work in community physical activity showed me the tremendous potential of children and young people not only as consumers of physical activity opportunities but also as leaders of physical activity.

Simultaneously research and reporting of children's activity levels and motivations for physical activity always fell short for me in reflecting that potential. Research methods appear to emphasise the need to measure and assess children at best paying lip service to power sharing in the research environment. The policy research environment appeared to be highly politicised, much aimed at making the case for existing services and service deliverers rather than engaging in open creative new conversations driven by children.

In coming to this study believe there remains untapped potential to harness children's views of physical activity to better inform adult policy makers and practitioners. However, my experience leaves me with a preconception that there is no policy will to do so. Whilst I have not chosen to adopt a critical perspective in this study, preferring to focus on children's social construction of their physical activity experiences, I recognise that I subconsciously draw parallels with feminism and the need to address emancipation of children in their physical activity environment.

My driving motivation for this research study is to foreground children's expert views of their world and in this I may be 'over valorising' children's roles in society as Hammersley (2014) points out.

In arriving at this study, whilst I believe I have made a cogent case for the shortcomings of national sport and physical activity policy, I have to also recognise that my position on this issue is heavily influenced by my own physical activity experiences and preferences. Traditional sport and competition can be highly motivating for some children and adults. Simultaneously, it may be that for some there is no form of physical activity that engages them. Physical activity may not have the capacity to touch every person in a life enhancing, emotional or spiritual way. As a practitioner it is appropriate to hold on to the hope it can, as a researcher it is important to recognise that it may not

Appendix IV. Plan for the collaborative thematic analysis

(Based on Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) Six phases of thematic analysis)

STEP	ANALYSIS STAGES AND STEPS	SHARED DATA ANALYSIS ACTIVITY AND OUTPUTS
PHASE ONE: FAMILIARISATION WITH THE DATA		
1	Before the end of data collection, an initial familiarisation/review of data collected/generated.	<p>Discussion with each coresearcher about initial data collected:</p> <p>Summary of data - content and nature</p> <p>High level descriptions of what is (and isn't) visible in each coresearcher's data.</p> <p>Generation of additional data from discussions.</p>
2	At the end of the data collection, further familiarisation/review of each coresearcher's entire data set including partial transcription of a cross section of discussions about data	<p>Discussion with each coresearchers about their whole data set:</p> <p>Identification of what is important and what each coresearcher wishes to include/exclude</p> <p>Coresearchers to sort and organise their data with a view to preparing their story about their free-time pursuits</p> <p>Coresearchers to choose headings and sub-headings to describe sections of data</p>
3	Transcription and preparation of remaining data which coresearchers have identified as important in 2.	
PHASE TWO: GENERATING INITIAL CODES		
Simultaneous deductive coding (using coresearchers' headings) and inductive descriptive (content) coding of each coresearcher's data in turn		
1	Generation of deductive codes from coresearchers' headings and sub-headings describing their data	Researcher prepares a deductive code book for each coresearcher's data from the headings and discussions in Phase one.
2	Simultaneous inductive descriptive (content) coding and deductive coding (using coresearcher's headings) of each coresearcher's data in turn	<p>Researcher inductively codes each coresearcher's data building and reviewing the inductive code book between after coding each coresearcher's data.</p> <p>Researcher simultaneously deductively codes data using the deductive headings and sub-headings codes</p>

STEP	ANALYSIS STAGES AND STEPS	SHARED DATA ANALYSIS ACTIVITY AND OUTPUTS
		coresearchers prepared to describe their data.
PHASE THREE: IDENTIFYING THEMES		
1	Review all code descriptions: Group and re-group each coresearchers' codes to make best match of data with code descriptors.	Set of codes and code descriptors which complement the coresearcher's summaries of their activity choices.
2	Check consistency and accuracy of coding: Amend and adjust coding descriptors and/or return to data to recode in response to feedback.	
3	Step 3 Identification of patterns in each coresearcher's coded data: Prepare visualisations of data e.g. NVivo tree maps and cluster analysis maps to identify themes in data from coding patterns. Identify initial themes which cluster codes and embrace the data in an effective and efficient way.	Set of coding groups which form initial themes and theme trees/matrices or other visualisations
PHASE FOUR: REVIEWING THEMES		
1	Review initial themes: Return to data and for each coresearcher review initial themes and check all coded data 'fit' the themes and adjust where necessary.	A thematic 'map' covering each coresearcher's data comprising a set of revised themes with each themes' clustered codes and theme descriptors
2	Preparation of the coresearchers' rich descriptions of their free-choice activities	Rich descriptions of free choice activities agreed with each coresearcher
PHASE FIVE: DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES		
1	Prepare cross - coresearcher analysis matrices: Compare and contrast themes associated with each coresearcher. Review data within each theme across coresearchers. Identify where themes may be integrated/amended to work across coresearchers. Check that all coded data fits with coresearchers' overall themes and	Review and amend final descriptions of cross-researcher themes with each coresearcher to prepare: A single or a few thematic map(s) of the analysis across all coresearchers A set of detailed descriptions of each high level theme supported by data which encapsulates all coresearchers' data.

STEP	ANALYSIS STAGES AND STEPS	SHARED DATA ANALYSIS ACTIVITY AND OUTPUTS
	that all coded data is included; go back to data to re-code if necessary. Prepare detailed descriptions for each theme.	
2	Prepare detailed descriptions of each high level theme	A rich description of the study coresearchers' free-choice activities employing coresearchers' own words and lived experiences.
PHASE SIX: PRODUCTION OF THE REPORT – report and discuss findings against specific research sub-questions		
1	<p>Identification of coresearcher's descriptions of their physical activity experiences</p> <p>Using the descriptions of coresearchers' chosen activities address the questions:</p> <p>“RQ1: What are the meanings that coresearchers invest in their chosen pursuits?</p> <p>RQ2: How do coresearchers structure their chosen pursuits, in particular what are the socio-cultural factors impacting on their lived experience of physical activity?</p> <p>RQ3: What are the essences of the experience of coresearchers' chosen pursuits?”</p>	Discussion and analysis of individual coresearchers' rich descriptions of their free-choice activities to identify the key aspects of physical activity within their chosen pursuits identified in the research questions.
2	<p>Cross coresearcher findings</p> <p>Prepare and identify the implications of findings about commonality and diversity of experiences across coresearchers to address:</p> <p>RQ4: “What are the consequences of coresearchers' perceptions and beliefs on their physical activity choices, behaviours and lived experiences of physical activity?”</p>	<p>Summary findings report for coresearchers to use with their identified audiences e.g. policy makers and practitioners engaged in providing for children's physical activity pursuits.</p> <p>Extended report for the academic thesis.</p>

Appendix V. Main Study Consent and Information Forms

V.a. Parent / Guardian consent form



**Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)/Centre for Research
in Education and Education Technology (CREET)**

“How 7–11 yr. olds experience physical activity”

Consent Form for Research Involving Children: Parent / Guardian

As a parent/guardian you are deciding whether your child can participate in this study about “How 7 to 11 years old children experience physical activity”. Your signature indicates that you have read the letter providing information about this research and have decided to allow your child to participate should they wish to do so. A separate information leaflet and consent form has been provided for your child to read and sign indicating if they wish to take part or not. Positive responses from both you and your child will be needed before your child is involved in the research.

You will receive a copy of the consent documents.

Name of child:

I have read and understood the letter outlining the research for parents together with the child participant information sheet and consent form and confirm that I have been able to ask questions about the research to my satisfaction.

I give my permission for my child to participate in this research study.

(Please delete as appropriate)

Signature of Parent

Date

or Legally Authorised Representative

Signature of Investigator

Date

Please use the stamped addressed envelope provided to return this form to the
researcher Linda Plowright at your earliest convenience.

V.b. Parent/Guardian information letter

By hand/email

Date:



Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

Finding out how children experience physical activity.

Thank you for allowing me to write to you about the PhD study I am undertaking with a small number of 7 to 11 years old children to find out how they experience physical activity. The purpose of this letter is to explain what the research is about and to ask if you and your child would be willing to be involved.

My general interest is in the role of physical activity for well-being in early childhood. There is a gap in research with primary school aged children which understands physical activity from the child's point of view. The aim of the study is to find out what 7-11 year old children choose to do in their recreation time and what physical activity, especially moderate and vigorous activity feels like to them. Starting now, I would like to observe children up to eight times, over a 6 month period. Each observation visit would be accompanied by a discussion about their experience of the activities observed and things they have done since the last meeting

Observation visits would take place out of school time, at organised activities and in their informal play time at home. Ideally your child would jointly agree a programme of observation visits and suggest activities and recreation times they would like me to observe. All observation visits would be agreed in advance at a time convenient to you and your child. I would aim to minimise disruption to their normal activities to allow them to make their normal choices and take part in those choices as they usually would. My interest is in observing what children choose to do in their recreation time and how they engage in their recreation time pursuits. Through observation and then discussion I am particularly interested in learning about how they experience physically active pursuits. The sorts of information we may discuss might be what they enjoy doing and why; what it feels like to take part in a particular pursuit they identify and so on.

As part of the collection of data, I hope child will take digital photographs and video of the things they enjoy doing between visits, for us to talk about when we are together. iPads would be loaned to your child for this purpose. In addition, to assist children in recalling their different activity experiences they may also like to wear wrist activity monitors (Fitbits) so that we can identify active times to add to our discussion. The purpose is not to measure or make any judgement about activity levels, simply to identify active times to help your child pinpoint and recall what the experience was like. All equipment will be provided.

It may be that your child will choose activities which involve siblings and/or friends and I would appreciate your assistance in ensuring that other parents are happy for me to be present observing the activities. I would be happy to provide information and speak to them about the research. No direct information would be collected about their child(ren) and their inclusion in the observation would only be as it impacts on your own child as the focus of the study.

Finally, your own insight into your child's experiences would be very valuable. I would like to discuss their choices with you and other adults who they identify as important to their physical activity experiences and choice of recreation pursuits. This may include teachers, coaches and other activity leaders.

Your child's participation in the study must be voluntary and as well as your own consent your child's independent consent to participate in the study will be sought.

All information collected as part of this study will be anonymised. Child participants will be invited to choose a research name, and this will be used in all documentation. Quotations from your child will be attributed to the research name and will not be traceable to your child. It is not anticipated that images of child participants or others will be published as part of the dissemination of the study or publication of the final dissertation to which this study contributes. However, if an image which might make a vital contribution to the published study is wanted for publication further specific written consent will be sought from you and your child and appropriate agreement

reached for the redaction of the image to prevent recognition. The identity of all participants will remain confidential and will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act. You can request to have any data specifically related to your child(ren) destroyed. The data will be stored securely in electronic form and will not be forwarded to any third parties. The study will be carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association. All data will be anonymised and may be used in interim reports and in my final thesis which will be available to you via the research website when complete.

Should data collected as part of this study be requested for use in other ethically approved studies as part of data sharing, further written consent will be sought from you. Transfer of data outside the UK may not be subject to the same data protection laws as in the UK under which this study is governed and you would be reminded of this should the matter arise.

All data accrued as part of this study will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). All documentation will be anonymised and stored securely to protect the identities of those involved and the information they have provided. All recorded data will be stored electronically in a secure storage space already in place within the University's secure storage system. All transcription of recorded data will also be securely stored electronically. All electronically stored data will be password protected. Any hard copy data will be kept to the minimum and converted to electronic copy as soon as possible and stored securely as outlined above.

Voice recordings may be retained for the purpose of dissemination of the research finding but only with the express and specific permission of the research participants involved in those recordings. All recordings will be destroyed on completion of my Doctoral studies post October 2018.

All data collected as part of this study will remain confidential between the provider and researcher except if a child revealed any information which suggested that they were vulnerable or potentially at risk of harm. In this event the "Safeguarding and protection of children and young people at The Open University" policy will be followed.

I would be pleased if you and your child would consider taking part and giving your written consent to the research as set out in the attached consent form. If your child decided to take part but changed their mind for any reason, they are free to withdraw at any time without the need for explanation or any adverse consequences. They would simply have to let me know.

If you would like any further details please contact me using the contact information below or alternatively you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Grace Clifton at the address below or via telephone on 01908 858864.

Thank you for your time and interest in reading this information, I will contact you shortly to discuss your involvement further.

Kindest regards

Research Student

Faculty of Education and Language Studies, Stuart Hall, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA; Mobile: xxxxxxxxxx; Office: 01908 65xxxx; linda.plowright@open.ac.uk

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

Finding out how children experience physical activity.

I am carrying out research with a number of 7 to 11 years old children to find out how they experience physical activity and to learn more about their choices of recreation time pursuits as part of my PhD study. I will be observing one of the case study children in an activity in which your child(ren) are also involved. The purpose of this letter is to explain what the research is about and to ensure that you are happy that I will be observing the activity.

My general interest is in the role of physical activity for well-being in early childhood. There is already quite a lot of research about the success of different sport and activity programmes but there is a gap in research with Primary School aged children which seeks to understand physical activity from their point of view. The aim of the study is to find out what 7-8 year old children choose to do in their recreation time and what it feels like to them. I am observing four children over a nine month period and together we will discuss their different experiences and choices.

Your child(ren) are part of one of the case study children's activities and I will be observing what they do and how they take part in the [] session, which will include who and how they interact with others – potentially your own children. Whilst my focus will be on the case study child, I will clearly be observing children who are active with them and want to ensure that you do not have any concerns. I aim to minimise any disruption to the session and anticipate that the children will become unaware of my presence. I will sit to observe to the side of the session where children will be least aware of me. The session leader will introduce me and explain that I am carrying out research with the club to reassure any children who might find it disconcerting to have someone they do not know present.

No direct information will be collected about your child. Only information associated with the case study child's participation in the session e.g. as someone they might partner for an activity will relate to your child. All information collected as part of this study will be anonymised, remain confidential and kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act. You can request to have any data specifically related to your child(ren) destroyed. The data will be stored securely in electronic form and will not be forwarded to any third parties. The study will be carried out in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association.

In the event that your child(ren) provides data in association with the case study child that is important to the study, your permission would be sought to include it in data analysis, and it would be anonymised. The sort of data may comprise quotes whilst active. The data may be used in interim reports in my final thesis which will be available to you via the research website when complete.

I would be pleased if you would permit me to undertake these observations of activities in which your child(ren) are involved. I have attached information sheets and consent forms which explain the research in simple terms for your children and would be pleased if both you and your child(ren) would indicate your consent by signing and returning the forms to me or [the activity leader/parent/other] before the start of the activity. If your child decided to take part but change their mind for any reason, they are free to withdraw at any time without the need for explanation or any adverse consequences. They would simply have to let [the activity leader/other] know.

If you would like any further details please contact me using the contact information below or alternatively you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Grace Clifton at the address below or via telephone on 01908 858864.

Thank you for your time and interest in reading this information

Kindest regards

Linda Plowright

Research Student

Faculty of Education and Language Studies, Stuart Hall, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA; Mobile: xxxxxxxxx; Office: 01908 65xxxx; linda.plowright@open.ac.uk

V.d. Co-researcher Job Description



Research study: What do you like to do in your playtimes?

Purpose of the job:

Sometimes it is difficult for adults to understand things about children's lives. The purpose of this job is to help the adult researcher understand what children like to do in their free time and why.

Main duties:

- To talk to the researcher about what you like to do in your free time.
- To help the researcher to collect information about what you like to do.
- To help the researcher prepare a story about what you like to do in your free time.
- To help the researcher to make the research interesting and fun to do.

Key tasks:

- To think about your free time and what you do.
- To have short meetings with the researcher to talk about your free time activities.
- To choose activities you would like the researcher to see you doing.
- To take photographs and videos of the things that you do in your free time.
- To tell the researcher about the photographs and videos.
- To choose photographs and videos for your story of your free time activities.
- To share ideas with the researcher about good ways of preparing and telling your story.
- To explain things about what you like to do and why so that the researcher can understand.

Other important information:

The job will take until the school summer holidays and possibly another meeting later in the year. It will mean having meetings with the researcher about once a month.

You can choose to take as many photographs and videos as you like.

You can choose to invite the researcher to as many of your activities as you like.

You can give up the job or any part of the job whenever you like.

V.e. Co-researcher information and consent form

What do you like to do in your playtimes?

Hello - Can you help me?

My name is Linda.

I am a researcher and my job is to find things out.

I am looking for 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 year olds to help me learn about the things children like to do in their play time. Could you help



Play times are important. In play time you can choose what you do. They are times to be with friends and have fun. You can play games indoors and outdoors. You can play sitting still or running around. You can play with computers, with art materials and sports equipment. Such a lot of choice!

I am doing research to try to find out what children of your age like to do in your play time. I would like to watch you play and talk to you about what you like to do. What you tell me will help me understand the things you like and what it feels like when you are playing.

This information will help adults to provide good fun activities for children. If you would like to take part, we would meet once or twice a month. We would think of good times for us to meet. You might have some special play dates that you would like me to come to. You might go to a special club or play sports which you would like me to see. We can meet at home and at any of your activities.

There are three other things that will help us in the research

1. I would like you to wear a fitness monitor – it is like a wristwatch. It will tell us how energetic each of your different activities are. We can talk about them when we meet. You can tell me what you liked and didn't like.
2. I would also like you to take photographs or video of activities that you enjoyed or didn't enjoy. You might want to record something special that you have done. We can talk about your photographs when we meet too.
3. I would like you to think of any adults who help you in your activities and play time. I would like to speak to them too about the things you do. Your mum and Father and carers are good people to choose. There could be others like coaches and teachers.

If you would like to join in this research, please fill in the consent form. Ask an adult if you need help.

CONSENT FORM

This is the help I need. I would like to:

- Watch the things you do in your free time
- Ask you to wear an activity monitor (like a 'Fitbit') to measure your different activities
- Ask you to take pictures and talk about the things you do
- Talk to your parents and other adults who help with your activities.

If you would like to take part let me know. Put a circle like this **O** around your answers:

- | | | | |
|----|---|------------|-----------|
| 1. | Would you like to show me what activities you do? | YES | NO |
| 2. | Would you be happy for me to video and photograph your activities? | YES | NO |
| 3. | Would you like to take photographs/videos of what you do? | YES | NO |
| 4. | Would you like to wear a wrist activity monitor to see when you are most active? | YES | NO |
| 5. | Would you like to talk to me about your activities? | YES | NO |
| 6. | Would you let me to record what you say? | YES | NO |
| 7. | Have you read and understood what the research is about? | YES | NO |
| 8. | Do you understand that you don't have to take part if you don't want to? | YES | NO |
| 9. | Do you have any questions about the research? | YES | NO |

All your information will be kept private unless you tell me something that might show you could be harmed. If you tell me something that might mean you could be harmed, then I will speak to your parent or another adult to make sure you are kept safe.

Choose a research name

When we report research, we don't use our proper names. Choose a name you like and write it here:

.....

Write your real name here:


.....

Ask an adult if you need help with any of these questions.


Thank you,

Linda

Appendix VI. Coresearchers Out of School Activities (O.O.S.A) Research Newsletter



O.O.S.A.
SPRING EDITION



I'm Georgia and I'm 10 years old and, live in Yaxley, Peterborough.

ALL ABOUT ME!


I have recently broken my arm, I broke it horse riding it's all healed now, but I had to have two operations! I now have 1 green pin and 1 pink pin inside my arm!

I enjoy playing netball, but for the past few months I haven't been able to play. I find it unfair that the only netball clubs locally have an age limit of 11!

Anyway, I am part of the research team and have been helping collect data for Linda Plowright. I have been helping her to gather research about our out-of-school-activities, (O.O.S.A). I am part of a drama club, and love acting! When I'm older I would like to be a... ACTRESS! In a comedy TV series!

And my dream car would have to be a mini! A red one with the union jack flag on the roof!


IS THIS WHAT AN OOSA LOOKS LIKE?



Is this what an C.C.S.A looks like?

If you have any other ideas of what an C.C.S.A. might look like be sure to put them forward!

Thank you for reading my newsletter I hope you have a good holiday!



Appendix VII. Extract of Georgia's free choice pursuits presentation



BOOK DAY
CRAZY HAIR-DO!!



SURFING
HAVING FUN
RIDING THE
WAVES!!!



SWIMMING
WE WON THE
SWIMMING GALA!



PUNTING
RELAXING ON A
PUNT IN
CAMBRIDGE!



TALLINGTON
WE GO TO TALLINGTON
AND DO SOME WATER
SPORTS, IT'S SO
AWESOME!!!



SUMMER 2017
MIDNIGHT SWIM IN CYPRUS!
FLIPPING EGGS AT A
JAPANESE RESTAURANT!
A RANDOM INTERNET IMAGE!



I ALSO LIKE:



NETBALL

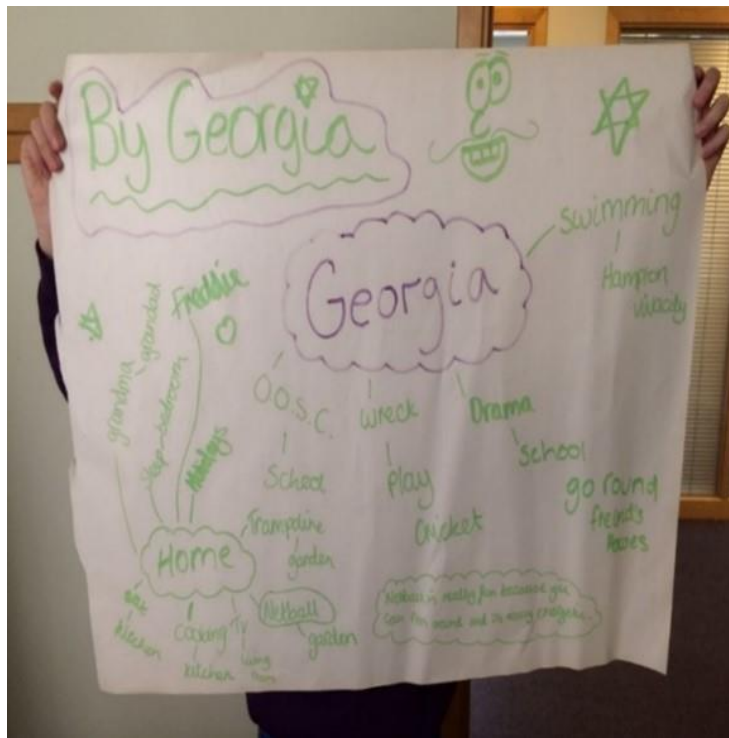


BARBECUES

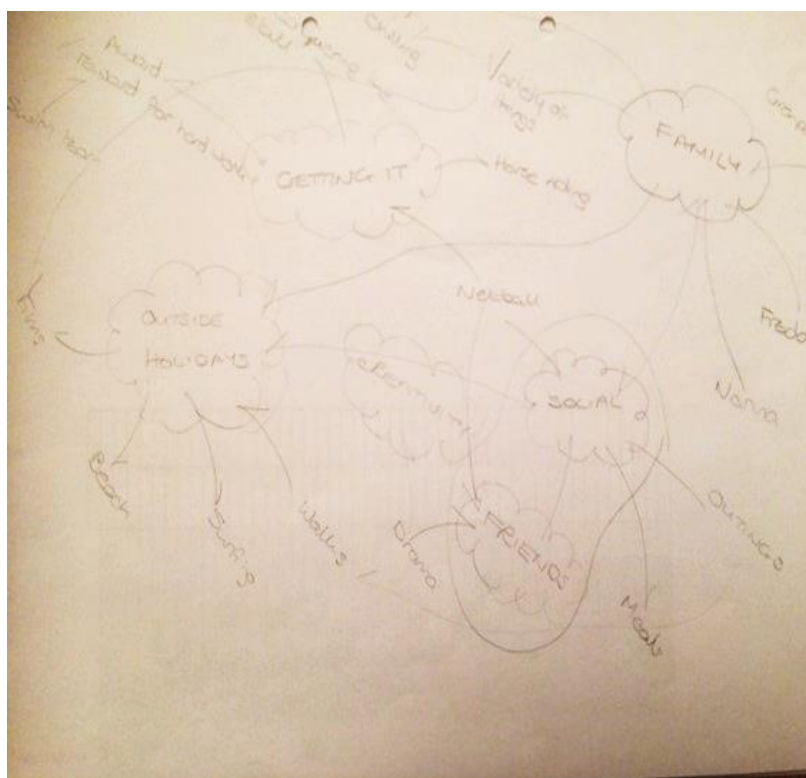


HANGING OUT WITH MY BFF'S

Appendix VIII. Georgia's (a) data planning, (b) in progress and (c) final presentation mind maps



(a). Georgia's data planning mind map

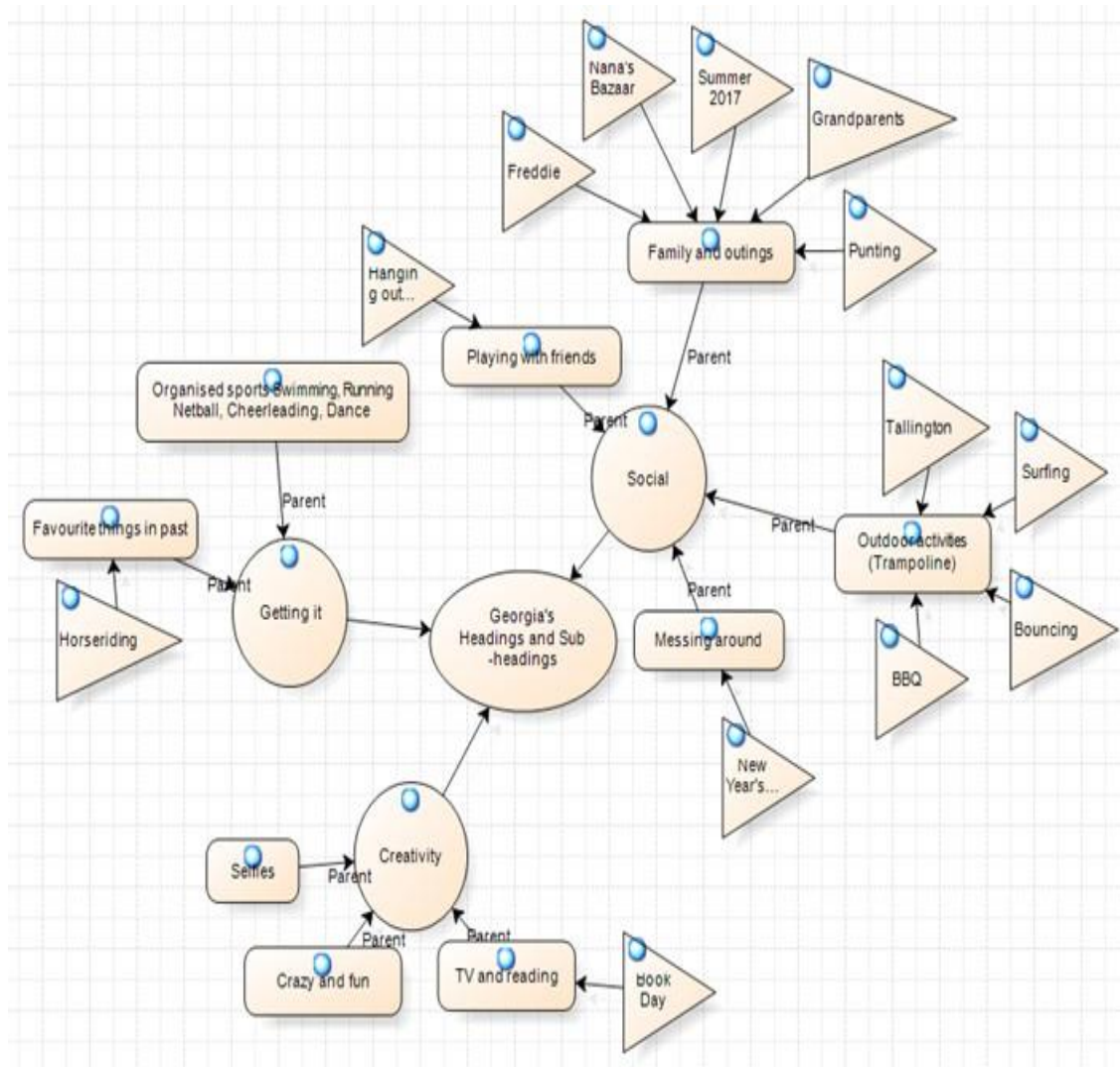


(b). Georgia's data collection in progress mind map



(c). Georgia's final presentation mind map of key headings

Appendix IX. NVivo modelling of Georgia's data



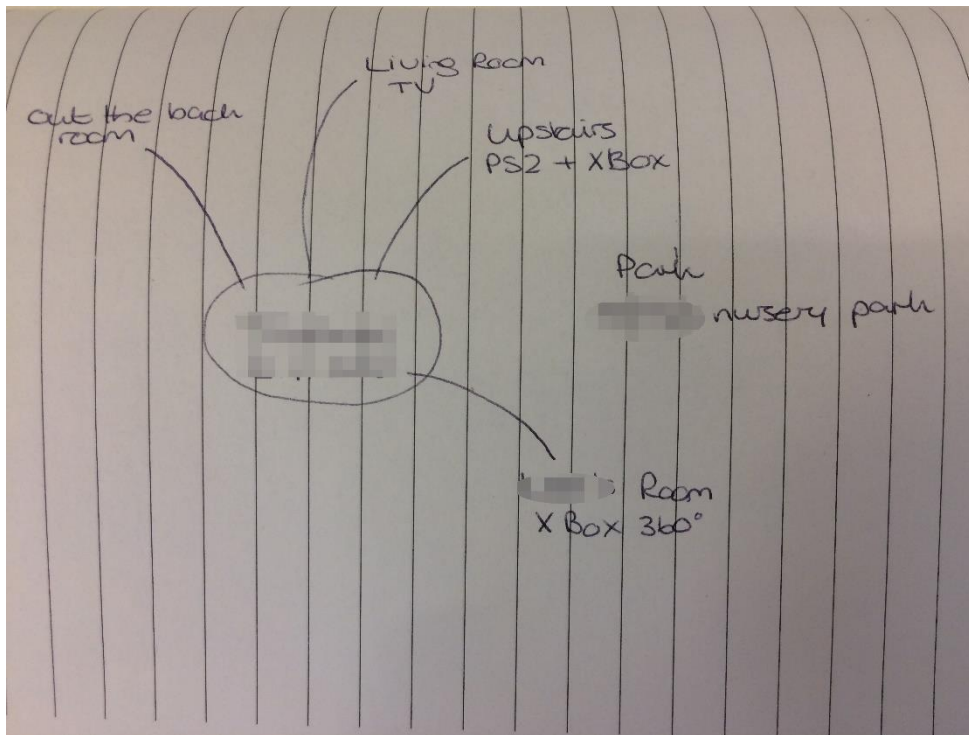
KEY:

○ = Georgia's main data headings; □ = Sub-headings; ▴ = Categories

NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data. Here for instance the sub-heading 'TV and reading' is part of the parent heading 'Creativity' to indicate that there is data collected to the theme or sub-theme.

NVivo inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

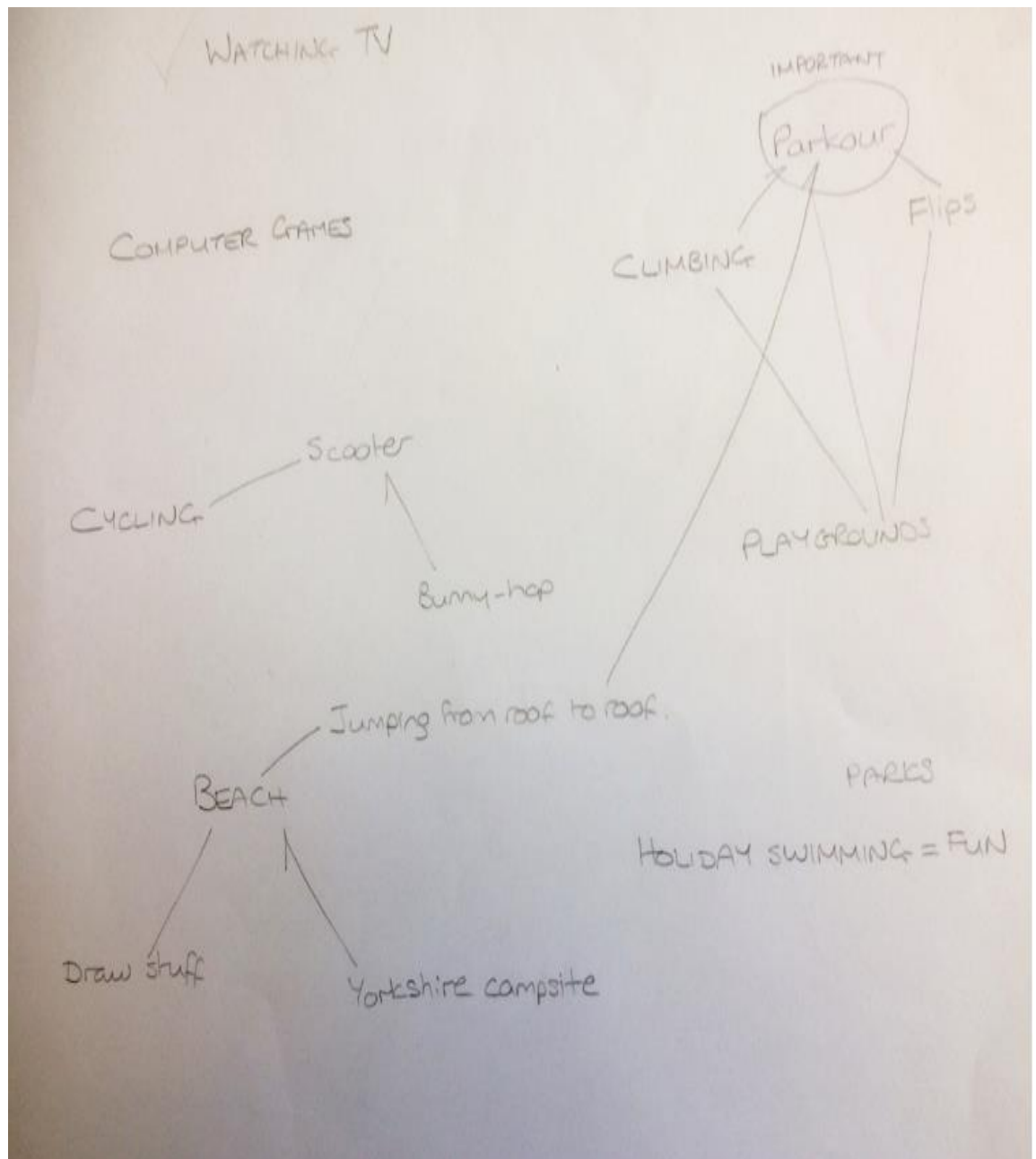
Appendix X. Jay's (a) data planning, (b) in progress and (c) final story mind maps



(a). Jay's data planning mind map

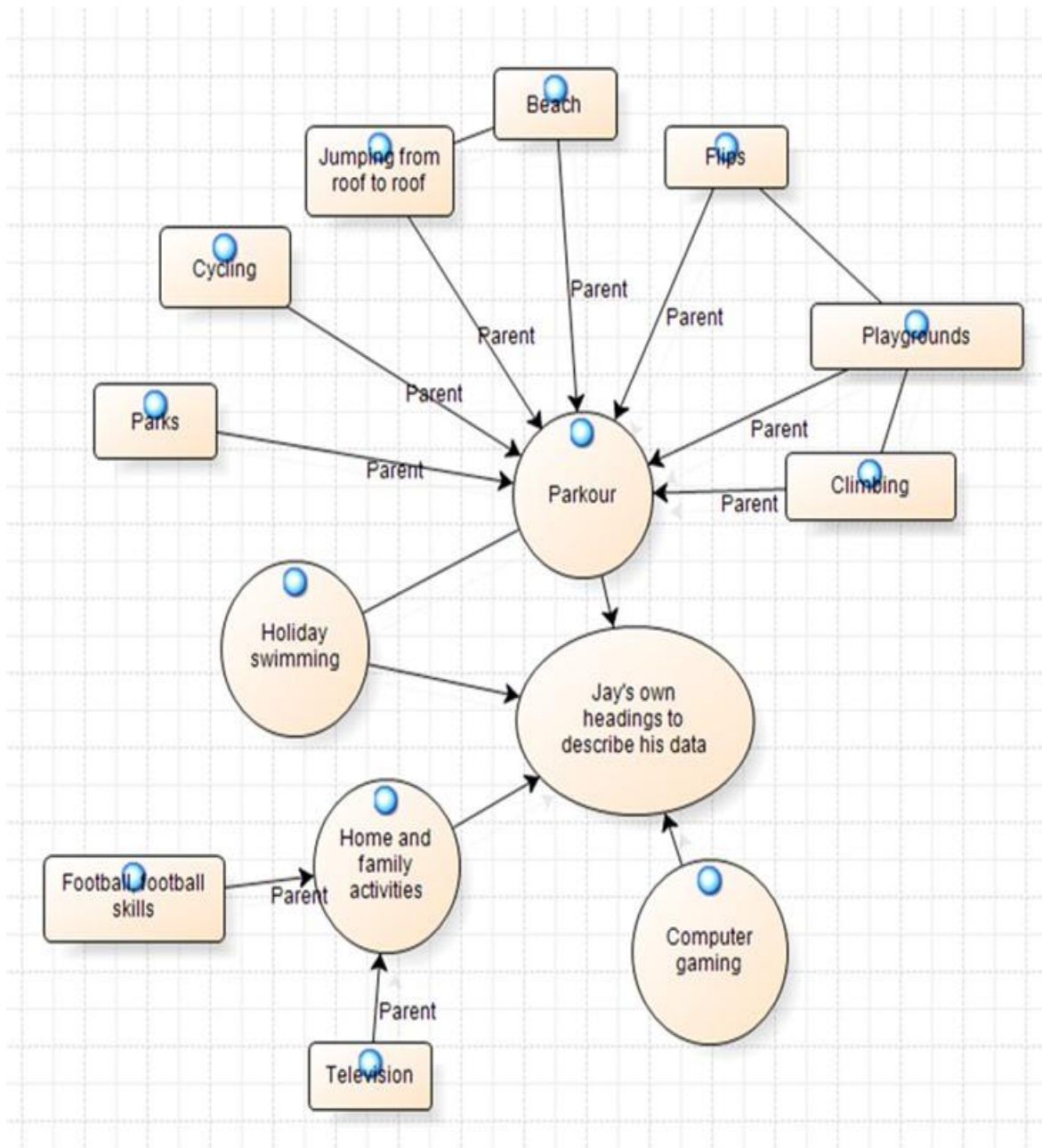


(b). Jay's data collection in progress mind map



(c). Jay's final story mind map of key headings

Appendix XI. NVivo modelling of Jay's data



KEY: ○ = Jay's main data headings; □ = Sub-headings

NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data. Here for instance the sub-heading 'Football, football skills' is part of the parent heading 'Home and family activities'.

NVivo inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Appendix XII. Extract from Jay's story about his free-choice pursuits

My favourite things for doing:

Swimming is just one thing⁵, football is one but climbing is my favourite thing⁶

Swimming

I have been having swimming lessons for about two years and I go swimming on Saturdays with my Mum and sister at the same pool to the "Splash and Floats" session.

1:06:28.7 – "Yeah and I don't I, don't practice swimming any more. I left at green and I didn't want to go into blue in the next stages. The only swims I (missed) is doing the GTA swim. (Starts to giggle)"¹⁵.

I like that pool because it is warm and I love to swim. On holiday I will go down the water flumes at the holiday parks. I can get along fast with my "GTA" stroke like on my computer game.

I don't play that (GTA) anymore. I don't like it anymore but I still like to swim (16:28.7 – 1:07:50.2)"¹⁵.

In the water I can do 100 or more press ups and pull ups and I like to do big jumps into the water and duck dives so that I pop up behind people and surprise them: "It's me again!" I can pick things up from the bottom of the pool and hold my breath underwater. I can race a whole width without breathing. There are mats and floats in the swimming session which I can duck under and turn over or push with my head. Sometimes I can climb on a mat to surf it and then do a big fall off.⁷

Swimming's 'kinda not my favourite, favourite but it's quite good actually' (1:07:37.1– 1:07:50.2)"¹⁵.

Climbing

Climbing is my favourite 1:07:50.2 – 1:08:05.4)"¹⁵. I like climbing because I like to climb trees and get coconuts down and everything⁸ Climbing a tree feels good⁹. I do climbing in the back garden¹⁰. I can climb up and look over our garden fence to see where my football has gone¹¹ and climb our garden gate To climb you put one foot up and then put your hands up and then you put your other foot up and you pull yourself up and then you are there¹² *I like getting up high. I like having fun. 'Cos I like, I don't really know how to explain it. It feels 'Gooooood beecause I love climbing ... because you like go up stuff and you like climb over stuff and it's part of Parkour which I love doing as well which is my favourite. (1:09:03.2 - 1:09:39.0)"¹⁵.*

Parkour

I love it see' cos when I'm older I just wanna learn Parkour and go free running in town and do like just like jump over stuff, climb over stuff, do flips over stuff (1:09:38.9 - 1:10:13.8)"¹⁵. I'm learning Parkour but I'm learning climbing in Parkour. And then I'm going to learn flips and stuff when I go to the trampoline park' (1:10:13.7 - 1:11:30.3)"¹⁵. To learn my Parkour: 'I'm just like climbing and like practicing jumping off stuff and climbing high places' (1:11:30.2 - 1:11:57.4)"¹⁵. I practise at home over the sofa and at my sister's house on her sofa (1:12:40.3 - 1:13:12.9)"¹⁵.

Football

⁵ 170523 INT M JAY at home conversation about favourite things (Timespan 0-18.2)

⁶ 170523 INT M JAY at home conversation about favourite things (Timespan 25.3-41.7)

⁷ 170304 OBS FM BGJAY Splash and floats session field note

⁸ 170523 INT M JAY at home conversation about favourite things (Timespan 41.6-53.5)

⁹ 170523 INT M JAY at home conversation about favourite things (Timespan 0.56.0 – 1:04.5)

¹⁰ 170523 INT M JAY at home conversation about favourite things (Timespan 1:10.8 – 1:14.8)

¹¹ 170523 OBS M JAY Climbing the fence 2 IMG_1164 24s (2) (Timespan 0:09.7 – 0:13.9)

¹² 170414 PHO M JAY Sowing seeds (9) 0290

I play football sometimes when I'm in the garden when it's really hot or sometimes when I'm over the field. I have a football goal in my garden. I practice football trick shots in my garden. I have one trick chip shot where say there are a load of different team in front of me and there's a guy in front of me you go and pass with your trick shot. Or to trick the other player like if there's two you go to kick it into that one and use the trick shot to kick it to the other one. There is a criss-cross chip shot. You cross your feet then you kick it and they you jump back to normal feet¹³.

At home

At home I play with my toys in the garden and in the house. For instance I have a gun that you arm and I shoot it outside from the house. It goes at 17 miles an hour. If I shoot it from the house towards the garage at the end of the garden I can hit the garage door a bit.¹⁴ ~~I also like playing with my electric cars which I race with my sister.~~¹⁵



That's super old, so I can't play with that any more (1:48:08.7 - 1:49:30.7)¹⁵.

Sometimes I help my Mum and Dad do jobs *but sometimes ... I get bored doing stuff like that (1:51:31.5 - 1:52:37.0)¹⁵*. I put on my waterproof jacket and trousers and wellington boots and help my Dad wash the car. I use the hose to squirt water on the care after he has washed it.¹⁶ I have to turn the top of the nozzle head around to make it work.¹⁷ My sister and I helped paint the garden fence. We each painted our own planks. We painted one plank at a time to as high as we could reach. We used brown paint from a tin which we put on a chair so it was easy to reach.¹⁸

~~Sometimes when I am at home I put my apron on and bake. I baked Easter biscuits which I cut out in different shapes like chickens and eggs. I used my recipe book. I have to concentrate when I am baking like when I have to transfer the cooked biscuits to the cooling trays.~~¹⁹ ~~I also like to sample the finished biscuits~~²⁰.

I hardly do it any more (1:52:37.0 - 1:54:00.3)¹⁵.

~~My sister and I also sowed some seeds at Easter. We worked in the living room and covered the table to catch the compost that fell out of the seed trays. I had to concentrate on sprinkling the seeds onto the compost~~²¹ ~~and then I used a spray gun to water the seeds.~~²²

I don't like gardening and stuff like that (1:52:37.0 - 1:54:00.3)¹⁵.

Note: On Jay's request, the researcher drafted Jay's story for him wherever possible using Jay's own words from discussion of the activities, photographs and videos he had shared. Blue italicised notes and crossing out indicate examples of Jay's extensive amendments to the draft as he took ownership of his story.

¹³ 170523 OBS M JAY Football tricks and cycling conversation

¹⁴ 170523 INT M JAY at home showing how to play with his gun (Timespan 0 – 0:48.4)

¹⁵ 180413 INT M JAY first data analysis meeting

¹⁶ 170102 PHO FM JAYBG Car washing Jay with hose IMG_0259

¹⁷ 170102 PHO FM JAYBG Car washing Jay fixing hose head IMG_0258

¹⁸ 170523 PHO FM JAYBG Easter and May fence painting 3 IMG_0298

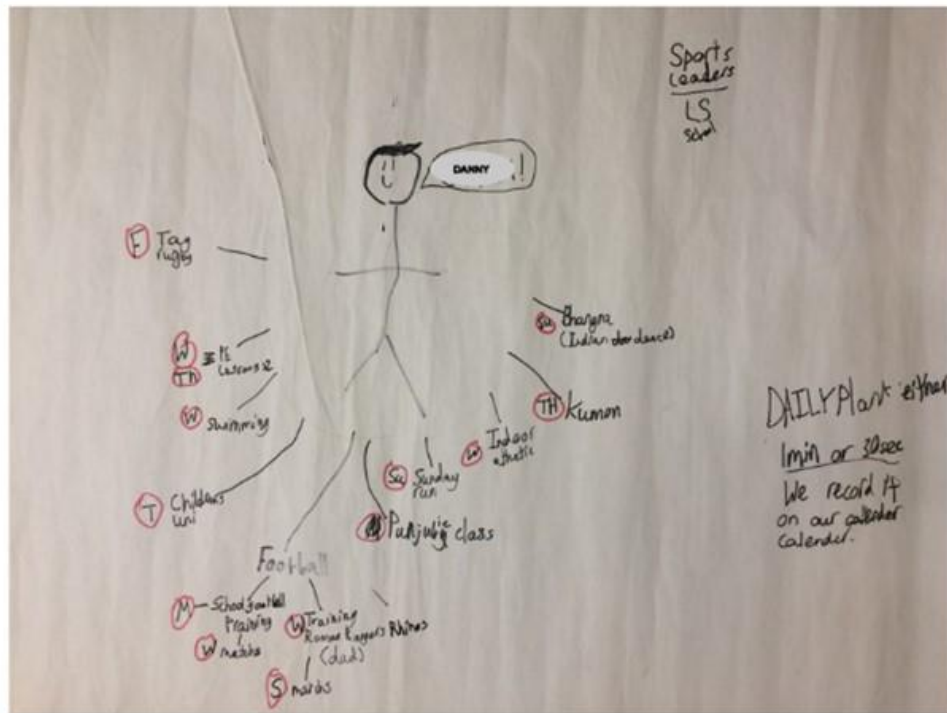
¹⁹ 170415 PHO M JAY Baking lifting biscuits off sheets IMG_0291

²⁰ 170415 PHO M JAY Baking sampling IMG_0292

²¹ 170414 PHO M JAY Sowing seeds (9) IMG_0290

²² 170414 PHO FM JAYBG Sowing seeds watering IMG_0289

Appendix XIII. Danny's data (a) data planning, (b) in progress and (c) final presentation mind maps

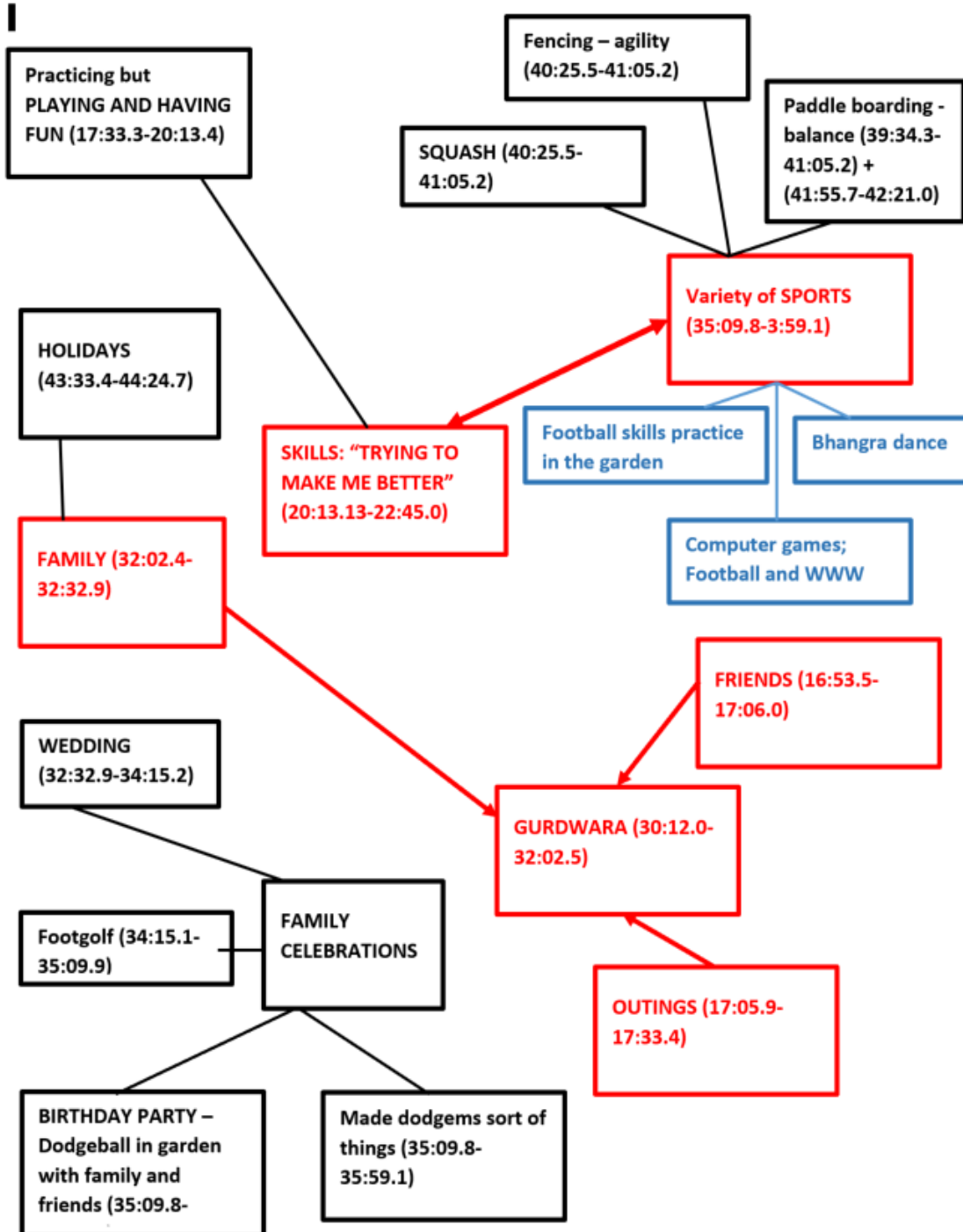


XIII.a. Danny's data collection planning mind map



XIII.b. Danny's review of data collection in progress mind map

XIII.c. Danny's mind map of headings from his final story



Appendix XIV. Extract Danny's story: What I like to do in my free time

A random selection of Danny's photo-story which numbered 77 photo-slides in total.

Captions given when provided.



What I like to do in my free time



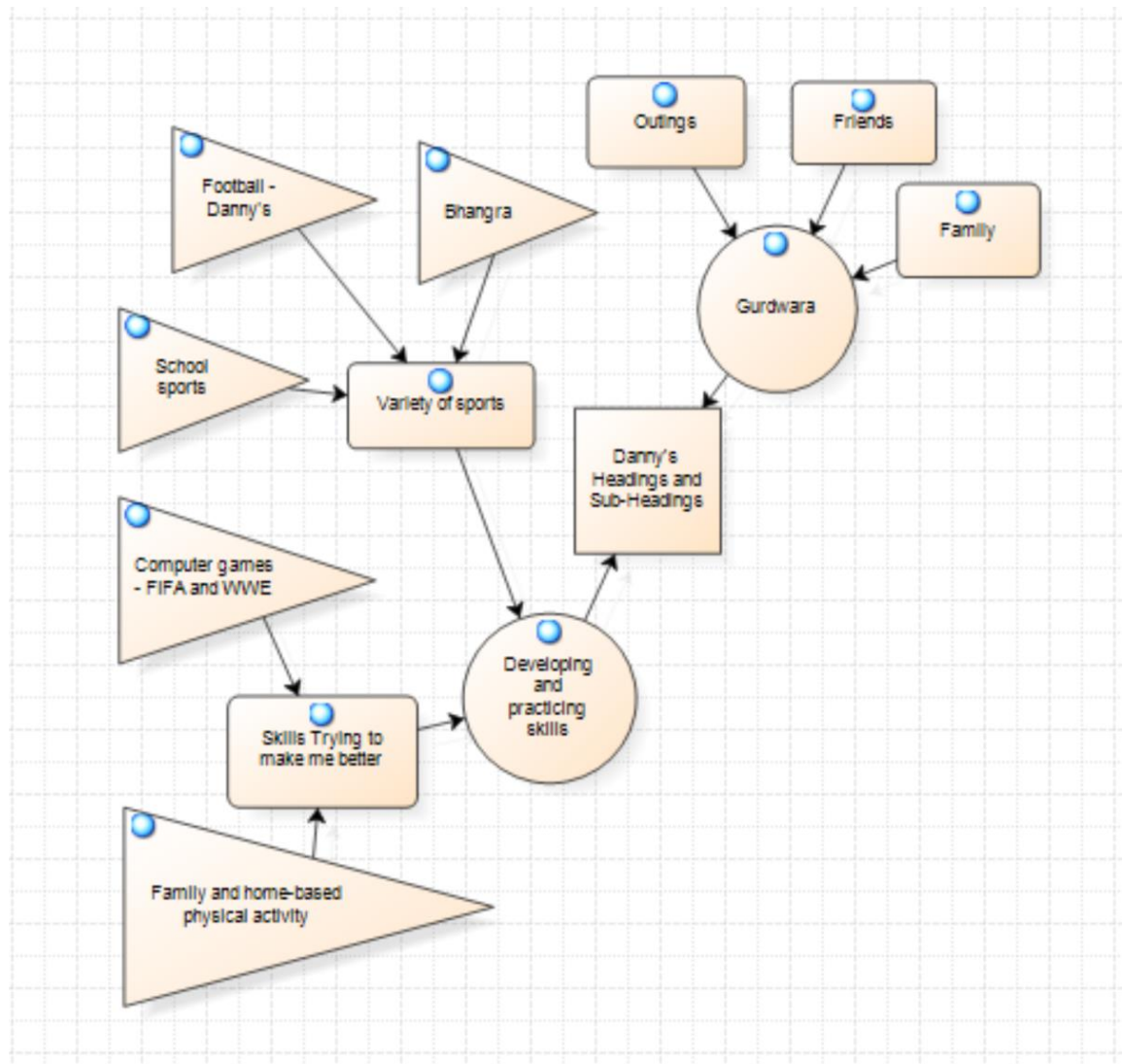
My cousins come over and we made a den!!!



Celebration time!!!

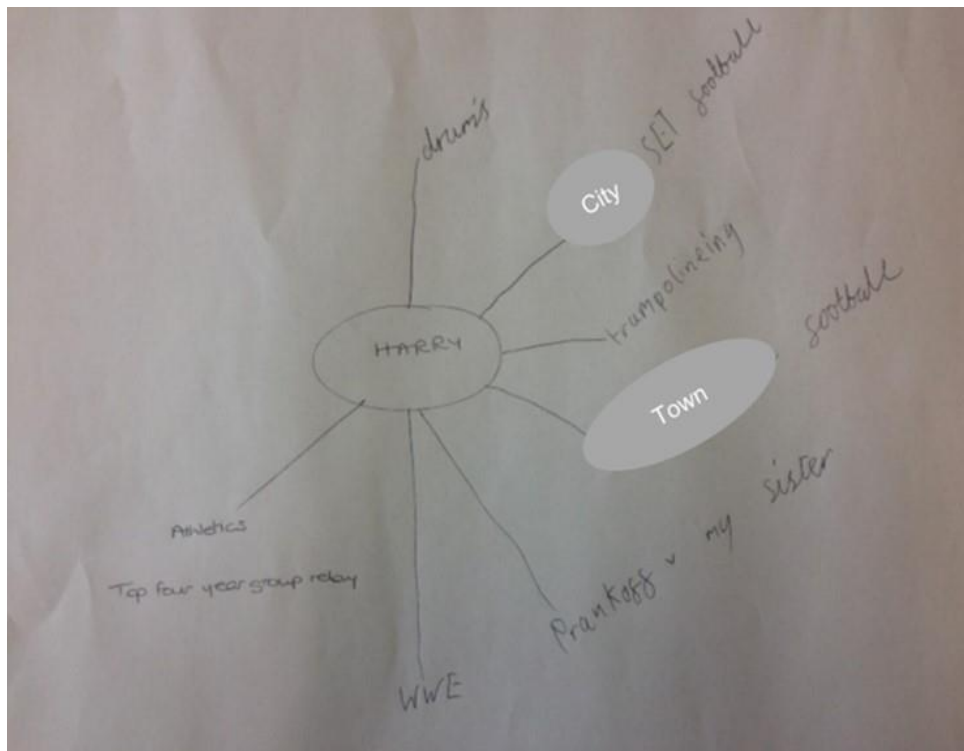


Appendix XV. NVivo modelling of Danny's data



NVivo inserts 'parent' labels and arrows in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data. Here for instance the sub-headings 'Family', 'Friends' and Outings' are part of the parent heading 'Gurdwara'. NVivo also inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to the shape.

Appendix XVI. Harry's (a) data planning (b) in progress and (c) final story mind maps

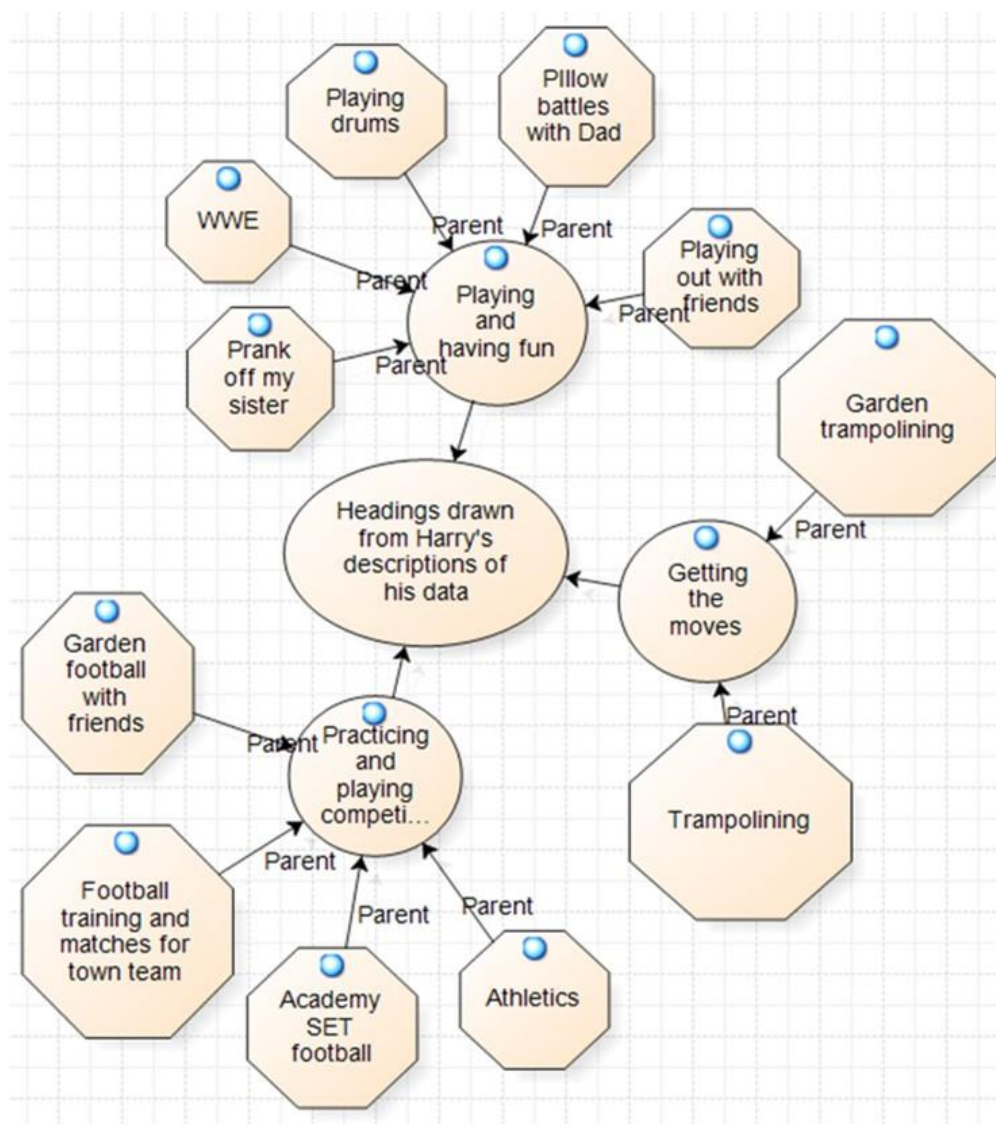


(a). Harry's data planning mind map



(b). Harry's data collection in progress mind map

Appendix XVII. NVivo Modelling of Harry's data

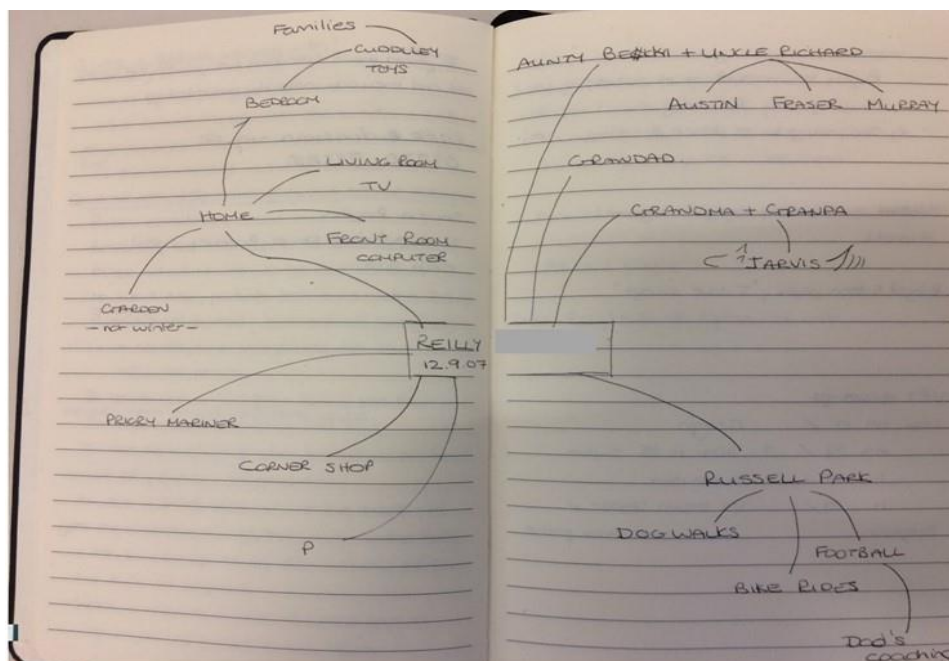


KEY: ○ = Harry's main data headings; ⬡ = Sub-headings

NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data. Here for instance the sub-heading 'Trampolining' is a sub-heading of 'Getting the moves'.

NVivo inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Appendix XVIII. **Reilly's (a) data planning, (b) in progress (c) final data mind maps**



(a). Reilly's data collection planning mind map

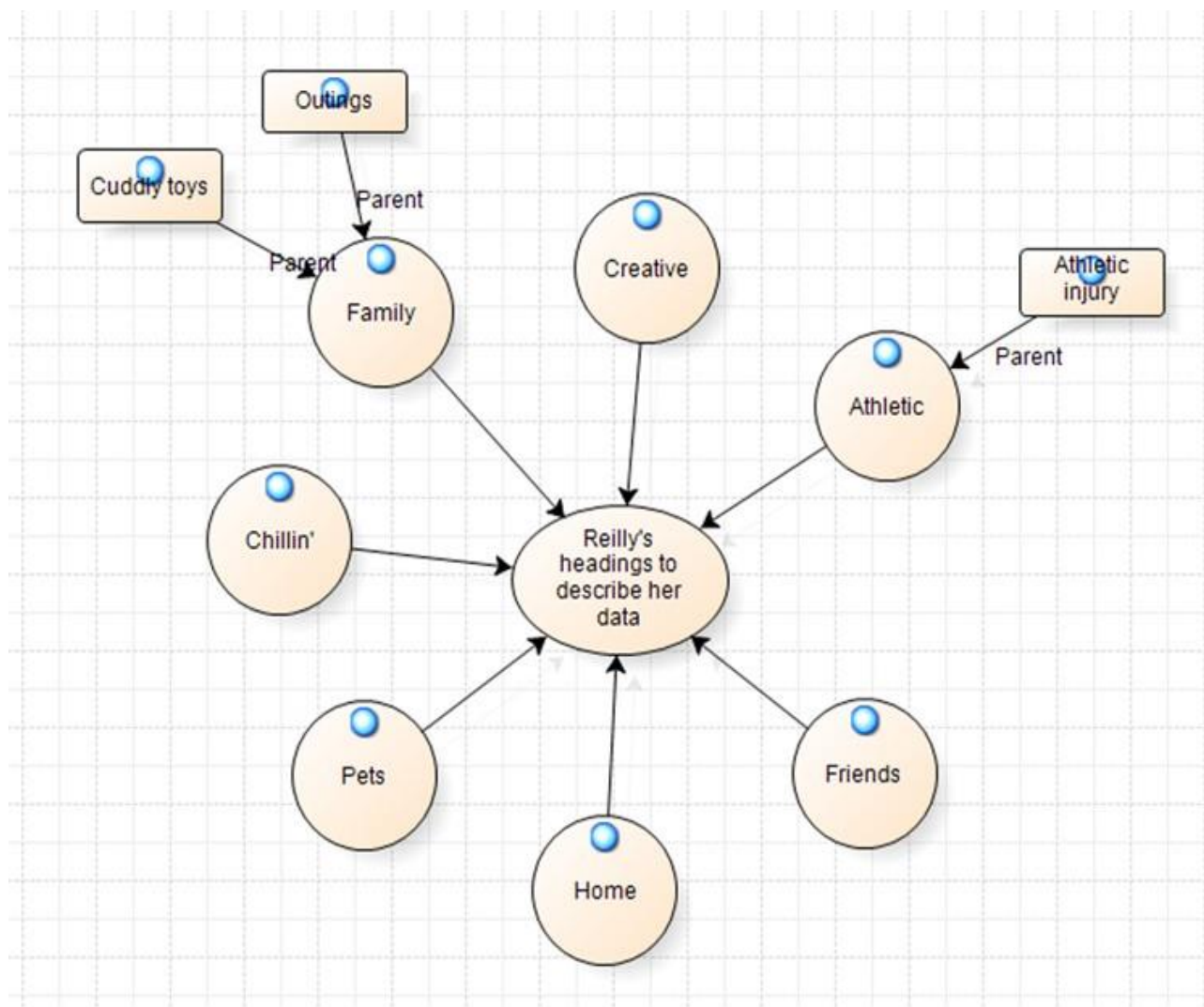


(b). Reilly's data collection in progress mind map for review



(c). Reilly's mind map of her final data collection

Appendix XIX. NVivo modelling of Reilly's data



KEY: ○ = Reilly's main data headings □ = Sub-headings;

NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data. Here for instance the sub-headings 'Athletic injury' is part of the parent heading 'Athletic'.

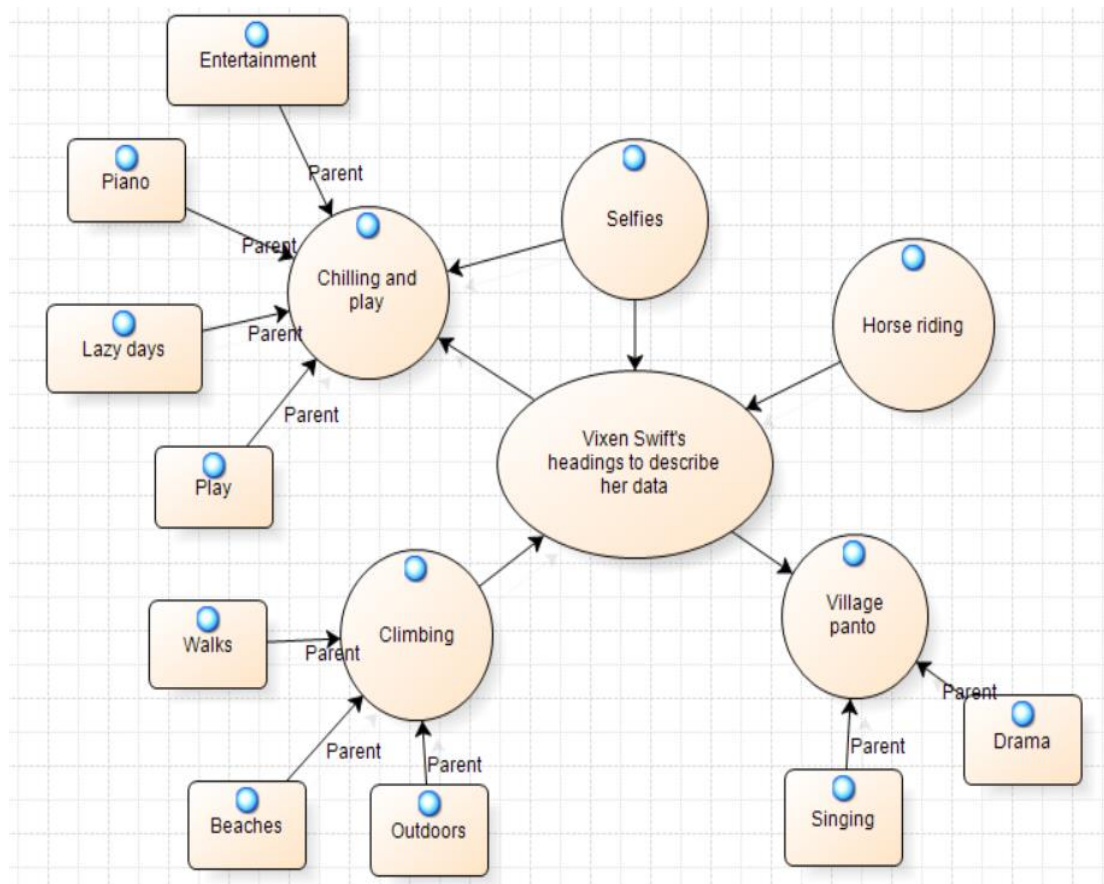
NVivo also inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.

Appendix XX. Vixen Swift's data collection: final story mind map with headings



Note: Photos covered over Vixen Swift stated were 'definitely not' for sharing together with her additional explanatory post-it notes.

Appendix XXI. NVivo modelling of Vixen Swift's data



KEY: ○ = Vixen Swift's main data headings □ = Sub-headings;

NVivo inserts 'parent' labels in some modelling to indicate the hierarchical relationship of data. Here for instance the sub-headings 'Singing' and 'Drama' are part of the parent heading 'Village panto'.

NVivo also inserts blue dots to indicate there is data gathered to a theme/heading.